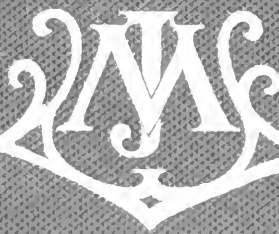
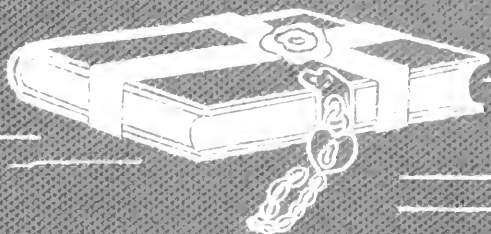


"JULIE'S DIARY"



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JULIE'S DIARY

A PERSONAL RECORD



BOSTON

JOHN W. LUCE AND COMPANY

1908

Authorized translation,
1908, issued by
JOHN W. LUCE AND COMPANY
BOSTON, MASS., U. S. A.

JULIE'S DIARY

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JULIE'S DIARY

THIS book was mother's Christmas present to me, and in it I am going to write all my thoughts and everything that happens in my life. I don't mean to flatter myself. I intend to write down the good as well as the bad. In this way the diary will be a truthful mirror. But I wonder when the book is finished, if it will tell the tale of a happy or a sad life? Will it be like a novel with exciting pages, or will it perchance be merely—nothing? Beginning the book I ask these questions with anxious curiosity, meanwhile recommending myself and my book to the mercy of all good powers.

Copenhagen, The Avenue,
27th December, 1905.

JULIE MATHILDE MAGENS,

Born the 23rd of April, 1886,
Daughter of Flowerpainter and Professor
HOLGER MAGENS.

NEW YEAR'S EVE, 12.30.

HOW solemn is the thought that the old year is finished, and that out of the gloom and darkness of the winter-night dawns the new year. Once more a year has passed—what has it brought me? Once more a year is beginning—what will it bring me? I can answer the first question. The old year brought me nothing. When I think of it, it seems to me like a long, straight road, a road without a break, without colour, without change. A series of quiet walks all of equal length, all in the same direction, and all through the same melancholy surroundings. How I see it all! In the morning dear little mother and I walking along the Old King's Road to town to do our shopping. We walk quietly, gliding along amongst the many people as though we did not belong to them. We know only a few, and still fewer know us. Yet in a way they all know us, for we belong to the constant wayfarers of the road. "The widow and

her daughter' we once heard a man say as we passed. We smiled when we heard the remark, the words seemed appropriate. Mother, small and slender, always dressed in black; I tall and thin—perhaps rather angular—not very smartly dressed, yet on the whole rather nicely. We never stop on our way, we walk, assiduously along, as if it was our business to walk, and we look neither to the right nor to the left. Still this is not quite truthful, or at all events only as far as mother is concerned, for I constantly glance about me out of the corner of my eyes.

We return home, and it is dinner-time. The family gathers. How cold it is in the dining-room, in spite of the rose and fruit garlands with which father has decorated the walls. Mother, Frantz (a long overgrown boy of sixteen) and I take our seats first, then father enters from his studio. He is tall and thin, and always dressed in a long coat of grey material; he always feels cold and is always suffer-

ing from some ailment or other. I believe it is he who brings the cold with him into the room. He looks sharply at us through his gold-rimmed glasses, nods and sits down without saying a word. We eat our dinner as if we were performing a sad duty. We eat very little to get as quickly as possible through the meal. That is the reason we are all thin and pale like the plants which grow in the shadow. That image struck me one day as we left the table. As we stood there, three tall, one short, I suddenly thought of a calla we had years ago. We fancied it was dead, and left it in a dark room facing the yard. But one morning when I entered the place, I saw that it had got four new shoots, slender and palish green, each ending in some tiny, transparent leaves.

The conversation at dinner cannot be called lively. It always begins with mother asking father, 'How do you feel to-day, Holger? Has your head been very bad?' To which the answer invari-

ably is, 'Oh, if it was only a headache I wouldn't mind very much, but those terrible pains in my back worry the life out of me.' Next day mother starts on the subject of the back, and it is pretty certain to be the head that is the most worrying.

Otherwise the entertainment at dinner is provided by Master Frantz, who has an elaborate repertoire of small vices. Frantz, who is at college in the second form, is constantly suspected of laziness, of a life of recklessness in the way of excessive enjoyment of cigarettes and clandestine drinks. He also arouses the displeasure of my æsthetic papa by a certain slackness in manners, by holding his knife and fork carelessly, by rocking on his chair, by neglecting his nails, etc. Thus our dinner is seasoned in a most delightful way.

The evening is the oasis of the day. When Frantz has retired to his lessons or his clandestine drink, and father at ten

o'clock has said good-night, mother and I have a cosy chat. We open the door of the stove so that we can see the fire shine through the grating, we put the red shade on the lamp, and make ourselves comfortable on the couch. What do we talk about? About everything and nothing, from the greatest to the smallest, about what we have seen in the papers, about books we have read, about life's great problems, about family events old and new, but above all we talk of love. To hear mother talk of love is so beautiful and so touching, that it brings tears to my eyes. Poor little mother with her big warm heart, who was born to be treated gently by life. Surely she must have had a romance in her young days. It cannot possibly be memories from her married life that fill her thoughts with so much poetry. She did not marry father until she was twenty-seven years old, both her parents had died without leaving her a penny. But it is loveliest of all when

mother tells me of her home, where life was lived in great and merry style and with musical evenings, dances, and sleighing parties. Ah, grandfather, grandfather, why did you squander all your money, so that none of the pleasures were left for your poor little grand-daughter? And you, lovely and wonderful grandmother, about whom the legends tell fascinating, naughty fairy-tales, why did I not know you, you splendid woman, who on your marriage day, tired of the great feast and rejoicing of friends, escaped with grandfather and flew off in a sleigh drawn by four horses to the brightly lit country inn, where you two alone continued the feast—you two alone.

If you—from your—I am sure—radiant heaven, could follow your family's earthly strife, I think you would pity mother and me for the way in which we have kept New Year's eve. In our home it is not the habit, as it was in yours, to honour the old year with ringing fare-

wells from friends gathered round a festive board, or bidding the New Year welcome to the merry popping of the champagne corks.

We sat quite alone, mother and I, waiting for the New Year. Each in her own corner of the sofa we sat huddled up, sat during two long hours, not having the heart to commence our usual talk. But when the old, worn-out bells of the grandfather clock, with their wheezy notes, sounded the midnight chime, we started up and listened, and a curious fear crept over me. It was foolish, but I seemed to feel that an hour of decision was near. Each time the chime rang out it seemed to say, 'Now is your time—now is your time'—until the strokes of the hour ended with a tingling sound as of distant sleighing bells. Then mother took me in her arms, bent over me, and said, as she kissed me: 'You big ugly darling, may God make the New Year bright and happy for you.' And when I answered, 'Thank

you for the old year, darling mother,' she patted my cheek and said, 'Alas, that you have so little to thank me for,' and shortly after, with her eyes full of tears, she said, 'I am afraid things at home are not so happy as they might be for my little girl. It is a different thing when one is finished with life, but young blood needs sunlight.' 'But I have got you, mother sweet,' I whispered. She stood up, smiled, and said with that roguish twinkle which she sometimes has, 'Are girls nowadays so easily satisfied?' Then we kissed each other good-night and parted.

I knew what she meant. She meant Erik. Yes, you dear far-off friend, whose few and short letters have been the shooting stars in this year of darkness. If you knew what dangerous conspiracy against your liberty we are planning here, I wonder if you would ever return?

Ah well, perhaps you would all the same. But if you knew in what an ugly and mercenary way I am speculating in

you, you would quite rightly despise me. For when I ask myself, if I love you, the answer is—no—and yet, if at this moment you entered the room and asked me if I would be your wife, I would say yes without hesitation. For you are the only raft in sight—my only chance of escape from this sad wreck, my home, and I cry out into this New Year's eve, help, help—if you heard me and came to me I promise you I would make you a good and faithful wife, always be fond of you, never forget what I owed you. I have learned not to ask too much of life. All I ask for now is liberty. Yes, mother, you are right. I am not happy here, I am longing for warmth and sunshine, I am a poor, pale calla forgotten in a dark room.

I have read through what I have written, and it makes me feel ashamed of myself. Here have I, the Julie Magens they at school called Puck, been sitting, letting the ink drop from my pen like tears. You ought to be ashamed of your-

self, dear lady; dry your eyes, and greet the New Year with a smiling face. Of course it will bring you something good if you will only stretch out your hands hopefully. Perhaps the morning will bring me a greeting from Erik. But if in the morning, or rather to-day, I should get a New Year's greeting from him,

Then girls in dance will sway
With roses all the way,
The merry music play
On Julie's wedding day.

This is my very own poem.

1st OF JAN.

WELL, I have reason to be in excellent spirits. I had a letter from Erik. It was quite a long letter, full of love-like longing for his 'foster-sister' Julie. Erik has nearly spent the money his father gave him for his studies in Vienna; he has also a flattering offer to en-

ter into business with one of the most able of our young architects. If his father will only advance the necessary capital, Erik will return within a few weeks, and 'I have then something very important to talk to you about,' he says in his letter.

In other words, within a month I shall be engaged to Mr. Architect Erik Glerup, and we will be married next April. We will take a five-roomed flat; we will order our furniture from the designs Erik made last Christmas, when we jokingly discussed how we would like to arrange our flat. We will have a charming and comfortable home, lead a sociable life in a quiet way, now and again we will go to the theatre and sit in good seats, we will become respected citizens, we won't owe anything to anybody; on the contrary, we will put something by each year, and for every ten thousand crowns we have in the bank we will allow ourselves a new luxury. We will end by being well off, perhaps by

having a title, and by getting the order of Danebrog.

And when 'Etatsraadinde' Julie Glerup, President of the Society for 'the Nutrition of Infants,' full of years and honour entering into the peace of death, looks back over her past life, she finds it grey—grey, prosaically honourable—honourably dull, which is just what she hates and detests most of all.

But even now when she is neither prosaic, nor honourable, nor 'Etatsraadinde,' and knows to a nicety what the future will bring when she is married to the good, respectable, and clever Erik, she will do it all the same, do it because she is a coward, who, in spite of all heretical thoughts and ideas, is ready to creep into a corner for fear of other people's criticism. It is only in her thoughts and dreams that she has courage enough to wander from that little sod of earth, on which she is sure of finding food. For was not her cowardice distinctly proved, when three years

ago, declaring heroically that she could not stand it any longer, she left her home, only to return five hours later like a naughty little girl to be greeted by her father's punishment and her mother's tears.

When I think that this ridiculous flight is the one brave deed of my life, I must blushinglly admit that I do not seem to have been born for anything more exalted than to be 'Etatsraadinde,' and that I, on the contrary, ought to thank Heaven on bended knees if I get so far. Therefore, hurrah for Erik's letter! It is a Christmas message to me. It promises me that before Midsummer Day I shall be a married woman, and the envy of all my women friends—which, after all, is better than nothing.

As this is New Year's Day, there has been a gala dinner for the family at grandmama's. Considering that grandmama is father's mother, she really is an amiable old lady. Deep in her heart, I

believe, grandmama is seriously annoyed with father's behaviour, if it is possible to use such a definite word in regard to grandmother's mental attitude. She sits immovable, planted amongst pillows on her old, straight mahogany sofa, over which hangs grandpapa's portrait in oil—father's first big picture. He is a stiff, lean, ascetic-looking clergyman, dressed in full bishop's robes, with the ribbon of the Grand Order round his neck. Grandmama is like a wax figure, not a muscle quivers in her large, regular, white face, surrounded by the goffered ruche of her cap. For the last two years she has not even had a piece of knitting in her hands. She sits like a symbol of peaceful old age, free from strife and worry. She speaks in the same monotonous voice, whether she expresses joy or sorrow, and she talks as slowly as if the finding of each word was an effort. But in the almost extinguished face burn two dear dark eyes, with a curious, strong fire. They

can look at one so steadfastly, and so lovingly, they can question in such a sweet, understanding way, that one feels tempted to throw oneself on her neck and weep away all one's foolish sorrows on her quiet old heart.

The menu at grandmama's New Year's dinner is as unchangeable as she is herself: a real family soup, strong, spicy, and scented with many vegetables in which float balls of forcemeat, then boiled plaice, followed by an enormous round of beef, red and juicy. After that, home-made apple cake. With this we drink claret, which is not too generously poured out, but which it is almost a crime to drink, so intoxicatingly beautiful is its perfume: it is a relic from the days of my right reverend grandfather, who died fifteen years ago. At dessert Madeira is handed round.

I cannot say that grandmama's dinners are very amusing, and yet how cosy and comfortable her home is. All inharmoni-

ous things must depart in the presence of this dignified old age, even father does his best to be more sociable. What a wonderful appetite it gives one to see grandmama with her kind eyes watching to see that each one gets something really nice and tempting, and to hear her hospitable invitation to second helpings. I smile to think how greedy I am at these dinners, where we linger over each dish, which is handed round with festive dignity by an old maid-servant in a spotless, old-fashioned apron; not to mention Frantz, who stuffs himself with quite indecent gluttony.

At the dessert grandma lifts her glass and says, always in the same words: 'Then let us drink a happy New Year to every one, but most of all to the young people.' When to-day I clinked my glass against hers, for I sat next to her at dinner, she looked at me for a long time, with her large eyes and said, 'I drink to you!'—'Thank you, grandmama.' She looked

again at me and said, 'Am I not right?'—'In what, grandmama?'—'I won't say any more, I am only asking.' I blushed, but the others laughed.

I wonder if anybody has spoken to her about Erik. What else could she mean?

Grandmama is not rich; she has just sufficient to live comfortably in her simple way, but by being economical in daily life, she can afford now and then to give us little presents, sometimes a few shillings for theatre tickets, sometimes a gold piece to buy something useful.

She always hands her presents to us in a curiously secretive way, and she does not like us to speak about what she has given us. When to-day, for instance, after dinner, I sat with her on her sofa, I noticed that she was gently pulling my sleeve. I peeped down and saw that she had pushed something white over to me. It was two two-crown pieces carefully wrapped in white paper, on which was

written, 'For you and Frantz to see the new play.'

So if we can get tickets we are going to see *Suleima* on Wednesday. I am so excited about it. You sweet old grand-mama!

2nd OF JAN.

GOT up early and was busy till lunch. 'Busy' means that I painted. I am painting under father's supervision, and at present I am working on a floral dinner service for the young Countess B. . . . After lunch, I practised for an hour, then I went to town with mother, but did not meet a single interesting person. After dinner I helped mother to go through the linen. Played a little for her in the evening. Went to bed early.

3rd OF JAN.

WENT to St. Matthew's church with mother. Lunch. Walk. Dinner. Did some embroidery. Not a visitor all day long. Not a letter. What one would call a delightful Sunday.

4th AND 5th OF JAN.

I PUT these two days together, because they have the same words and music. Got up early, busy till lunch. Practised after lunch for an hour and so on (for the rest see the 2nd of Jan.). I note for the sake of variety, that we have got a new neighbour, a young man, apparently rich. He has taken the entire flat in the fourth floor opposite. In the morning, when I am sitting in the bay-window working, I am entertained by seeing this young gentleman finishing his toilette. Without the slightest embarrassment he goes through his process of self-adornment, such as shaving and do-

ing his hair in front of his bedroom window. The window-sill is filled with an array of jars and bottles, combs and brushes, and in this laboratory our neighbour works for an hour, his face expressing the most profound seriousness. I have tried to make him ashamed of himself by ostentatiously pulling down the blind in my window, but without the slightest effect. When I lowered the blind, he merely glanced up at the sky to see whether the sun could possibly be worrying me, after which he continued serenely to part his hair. On the whole I rather like him. He possesses a natural arrogance which attracts me, a certain conceit which I envy him; I think he is what I should call a fascinating rascal. I'll try to find out who he is and what he is.

To-morrow night *Suleima*. How lovely to go to bed with the knowledge that there is something delicious in store for me the next day. *Suleima*, oh, that I were *Suleima*! That I were the bride

of a handsome Arab chief, and could lie with my beloved near the singing brook under the tall palm-trees, or could fly with him on his fiery horse over the wide plain under a radiant sky. Good-night, Suleima, I will dream I am in your place.

6th OF JAN.

SULEIMA' was a disappointment. Yet the music was beautiful—sensuously drowsy, passionately exultant, so wondrously free from moral scruples.

But only one scene made an impression on me. Suleima lies down to rest in her father's tent, when an hostile Arab tribe breaks into the camp, and the chief, lifting Suleima from her couch, bears her away with him. Suleima has been dreaming, and the abduction must be imagined to be a continuation of her dream. She sees the white-robed Sheik bending over her; she meets his admiring gaze, and hardly awake, she allows herself to be

carried away, partly paralysed with fear, partly captivated by his magnetism and by the fantastic violence of the situation.

The part of the young Sheik was beautifully played, though perhaps it was not intended that so much passion and poetry should be thrown into the scene of the abduction. Anyhow, though the part of the Sheik was very small, and he disappeared altogether in the later acts, his performance was for me the most striking feature of the evening.

I have never seen this young actor before. I am sure he has great talent. Now and again I have seen his name in the papers, but I do not think that he was mentioned in the notices of the play.

His name is Alfred Mörch.

7th OF JAN. BEFORE NOON.

I HAD a curious dream last night. I stood in the desert. How I came there I do not know. When the dream

began I was standing in the middle of a great sand-plain. I must have walked a long way, for I was so tired that I could hardly move my feet, which dragged after me as if they were chained with heavy leaden weights. Neither could I breathe. A stifling heat, which filled my mouth, nose, and ears, stopped me from breathing. Yet no sun shone in my desert. A grey and woolly sky seemed to close down over me more and more. It looked like a gigantic felt carpet, which would presently smother me. The sand was not white, but a yellow brown, and sulphurous fume ascended from it. I felt that in a few moments I should be dead. I did not rebel. I did not even try to cry for help, but wept quietly. Then I thought I became unconscious, and I dreamt that I had fallen asleep. In the dream of my dream I heard distant, soothing music—I remember thinking to myself—‘Now they are playing at my funeral’—but the music grew stronger and stronger. I heard

trumpets and bassoons and joyous flutes. Then I seemed to float through an atmosphere of wild music which came to me from everywhere, and again I thought to myself—'You must make haste and waken, or you will be late for the great feast.' And in my dream I woke. I stood again in the desert, but the music played on, and I heard a voice call 'Suleima!' I looked round, and saw far away on the horizon something white and shining, which came nearer and nearer in flying haste. Then I called out, 'My white Sheik, my bridegroom, my saviour.' All around me it grew brighter, the clouds lifted, leaving the dome of heaven clear and pure. I felt a fresh breeze, which came from a stream close by, and there in a whirl of music he rode towards me on his black horse, his white cloak flowing round him.

Then I awoke, and by my bed stood mother smiling and saying, 'You lazy girl, you have slept far into the morning,

but you looked so sweet, while you slept, I had not the heart to wake you. I have been standing here watching you for the last ten minutes.'

8th OF JAN.

ALL day yesterday I was in high spirits. I wonder why, for nothing exciting happened. The hours passed with the usual routine, and father was as like an undertaker as ever. All the same, my heart danced and sang within me, and everything seemed bright and merry. I astonished them all with my gaiety. During our walk, mother had constantly to remind me that it was not nice to laugh so loudly in the streets, and in the afternoon I paid Frantz a visit in his room. I treated him and myself to cigarettes, and he treated me to a liqueur. The boy was quite touched by my kindness; it was amusing to see how politely he suddenly

treated me. But when I left he said, 'Please give *him* my kind regards.'

I suppose he thought Erik was the cause of my good spirits. No; the reason was much further from all reality. It was the *Suleima* dream which still lived within me. How childish and foolish it was. But it was even more foolish that mother's words when I woke should have had their share in my happy mood. 'How sweet you looked while you slept,' these words sounded all day in my ears and filled me with tingling pleasure. 'So you really can look pretty,' I said to myself, 'and after all I am not always such an ugly darling.' But what a pity it is that my good moments should only come when I am asleep. 'Miss Julie Magens had last night a *belle nuit!*' That sounds very pretty, but unfortunately neither I nor any one else has the opportunity to admire the violet that shows its beauty only at night.

But so ridiculously vain had the moth-

erly admiration made me, that instead of writing my diary last night, I held a grand review of myself in front of my mirror.

My mirror is not a royal one, but only a short swinging mirror in a walnut frame, standing on a chest of drawers. I put the mirror slantwise, so that I could see more of my figure. I lit the two candles and placed the lamp on the chest of drawers. In this magical light Miss Julie presented herself in all kinds of flattering poses, and went through a series of mimical gestures. In putting down the results of my review, I am trying to be as impartial as possible.

Julie is tall and rather bony, yet, on the other hand, she is well proportioned. She is narrow across the shoulders and the hips, but at the same time unusually slim round her waist, so that she is far from shapeless, if she would only hold herself better than she usually does. When serious, her face is rather impossible, for her

nose is of such quaint construction that it rather disturbs every serious expression. Add to this that nature intended her mouth to be slightly open. When therefore, in serious moods, the upper lip is struggling to reach the lower one, it gives the face an extremely gloomy expression, naturally therefore Julie's face is greatly improved by a smile. The upper lip falls into its natural place, the large, even, white teeth are seen, and even the nose passes muster. But above all the brown eyes are made to smile. They screw themselves up behind a number of tiny wrinkles, and from their hiding-place they twinkle merrily at you. When Julie stands like this with smiling face, the dark hair falling over her forehead, throwing a kiss to herself in the mirror—her hand is slim and beautiful—she is almost a dear, and even a wee bit—coquettish.

The widow's daughter 'coquettish!' the disagreeable Professor Magens' 'ugly

kid' a dear—no, my good girl, either your mirror is lying, or you are an interested critic.

But all the same, when Julie went to bed after the mirror review, she was still in high spirits, and as a result she has just written a long and kind letter to Erik.

She has nothing else to relate about to-day.

9th TO 11th OF JAN.

SAND—sand—nothing but sand. Oh, what's the use of writing a diary about the days always—and—ever—the—same.

12th OF JAN.

MY neighbour is beginning to interest me. On the surface everything in his home seems to be so quiet and correct, yet I think this mysterious cavalier is leading an adventurous and fantastic life. One hardly ever sees him go out, but he

receives many friends, and ladies also come to see him. One lady sometimes comes in the morning, but he does not always receive her. Yesterday, for instance, she left ten minutes after she had entered the house. But I saw our neighbour standing behind a curtain, peeping out to see what had become of her.

Poor little beauty! Don't you think I saw how sad and vexed you were, though you tried to put on a 'don't care' expression and without turning walked down the Old King's Road with very correct demeanour. Oh, you horrid man on the other side of the street, how can you be so cruel to a little love-sick child.

Then there is the other, the favourite I have christened her. She comes in the afternoon, and always in a most mysterious way. She drives up in a one-horse coupé, which looks like a doctor's carriage. She is heavily veiled and wrapped in a big, fur cloak. Her tall and distinguished figure makes a charming sil-

houette against the light of the street lamp. I believe that my neighbour is very much in love with her. I always know when he is expecting her. He is at the window every moment; he opens it, looks up and down the road, closes it, then goes back into the room to return soon after. When at last he discovers the carriage, he quickly lets down the blind. For a short while his lonely shadow flits about, then another appears—a woman's shadow. Then both shadows glide away, and I fancy that my neighbour and his lady have gone into the dining-room, and have sat down at the prettily laid table, which I have seen being prepared by an elderly country-clad woman, who is my neighbour's housekeeper.

An hour afterwards the drawing-room is brightly lit. Through the laths of the venetian blinds I just get a glimpse of the large chandelier with its wreath of pale candles and also of an enormous yellow lampshade. In one place a lath is broken,

and through this peep-hole I can see the corner of a picture on which the light falls strongly, showing a woman's head and naked arm. But my neighbour and his guest I cannot see. They are most likely sitting on the high-backed sofa, which is partly hidden behind tall plants, and from which one gets a charming vista of the other rooms, which are also lit, the bedroom with its green globe silhouetted like a dim moon against the white of the festooned blinds.

On our side of the street it is dark, and I sit in the arm-chair in the bay-window, giving myself up to fancies. I am trying to imagine myself over there at our neighbour's in the lady's place. Who can she be? Is it possible that she can be a nice woman, a woman I might meet, a woman belonging to good society, and who perhaps, after she leaves our neighbour's, will go back home to play the virtuous daughter of respectable parents just like me? But if I were she, would it be possi-

ble for me to return home without any one guessing that anything unusual had happened to me, and without feeling as though I should sink into the earth with shame? No, no, impossible. It cannot be a lady who visits our neighbour. It is a despicable creature, a woman of the lowest kind. But in that case, why should she be so afraid of being seen? Why should she arrive so carefully veiled? A woman of the demi-monde would not need to hide herself. Besides—I don't quite know, but there is something unmistakably refined and shrinking in her manner, something so mysterious and sweetly-criminal about her, when, after considering a moment, she quickly opens the street door. She must be a lady. Perhaps even a very distinguished lady.

And so my imagination runs off with me. She is a distinguished lady visiting her lover. Who is he? Why has he hidden himself away in this quiet suburban road? At the last reception at Court,

when many foreign princes gathered in the king's palace, they met. He a foreign prince, and she a Danish nobleman's lovely daughter. The young prince became so infatuated with the girl, that he could not forget her, and while pretending to be travelling in the Far East, he returned to the North. Helped by his silent and faithful servant, he rented this out-of-the-way corner, and sent secretly this message to his beloved, 'I am here and await you.'

They are together in there, where it is cosy and full of warmth and perfume. The fire crackles in the stove, there is wine in the cut decanters and fruit in the crystal bowls on the table. They are sitting on the sofa, he puts his arm round her, they lift their glasses up against the light radiating from the numerous candles. They look at the sparkling wine, and they turn to one another smiling happily while they clink glasses. Then he says, 'My dear and lovely one, the hours are flying and soon our happy meeting will be over,

tell me do you love me as much as before?' She answers with her arms round his neck and looking deep into his eyes, 'My wonderful prince, lay your head on my heart and feel how it beats. It beats always with a stronger and stronger love for you.'

Or she kneels in front of him in her long, white silk dress; while he gently strokes the loose, auburn hair, he says, 'I have loved many women, but never have I tasted such intoxicating wine as that which I drink from your lips. Many women have told me of their love, but never have I heard sweeter music than when your kisses whisper to me—I love you.' She still kneels looking up at him with eyes in which happy tears tremble. When all lights in the other houses are out and only the globe burns in his room like a dim moon, he leads his beloved to the window, pulls the curtains back, and while looking out on the quiet, white winter night, he points to the window opposite and says, 'Look, over there lives a poor little girl, day after day

she sits like a caged bird, longing, longing without knowing for what. Feeling that life contains more than to sit behind a closed window, painting roses and violets on china. Vaguely feeling that love is the artist, who paints roses on the young girls' cheeks and violets in their eyes. Poor, pale little girl.' And she, the proud and beautiful woman shivers and clings to her lover, weeping softly with pity for the unknown girl and with terror lest she herself should lose her own happiness.

Thus I sit lost in dreams with tears in my eyes because the life I lead seems so empty and meaningless, until the noise of a door opening and a sudden light startles me from my fancies. It is father crossing the room to go into the hall to see if the evening paper has come.

He goes silently through the room with a candle in his hand, and when he returns he says, 'Don't you think it is time to light the lamp?'

Then mother sits up on the sofa, where

she has been lying half asleep—or perhaps been dreaming like I. I leave the bay-window, fetch the matches and light the hanging lamp. Without being in the mood for talk, each absorbed in our own thoughts, mother and I take our work from the big basket, always filled with stockings and linen which needs repair—for in our house things are mended ten times before they are thrown away.

16th OF JAN.

HOW foolishly I behaved this morning. Mother and I went for our usual walk. Outside the bookshop in New Street I noticed a man in a fur-coat, just as we passed him he turned round. I only saw his eyes, they met mine with a quiet, piercing glance. I knew at once it was the actor from the other night, the 'Sheik' from *Suleima*. I grew quite faint, my blood seemed to stand still, rushing a moment after to my head and dyeing

my face scarlet. The whole thing only lasted a second, for he disappeared almost immediately. Fortunately mother did not notice my absurd behaviour. I am a fool! What in the world was the matter with me? By chance a stranger gives me a casual look in the street, and I am paralysed. I am furious with myself. I should like to give myself a good beating, and I am furious with him too. This conceited actor imagines, of course, that he has made an overwhelming impression on me, made a new conquest and a victory very easily won.

How curiously things happen in life. I had not given this man a thought since that romantic *Suleima* dream; as a matter of fact I had quite forgotten him, and then this morning I meet him in the street, and this afternoon I hear him discussed.

I went to a birthday party at my cousin Emmy Lorentzen. Emmy, who is thirty-seven years of age, and the widow of a wine merchant, is one of the greatest chat-

terboxes I know. Under a mask of loving sympathy and in the sweetest way she says the most scandalous things about everybody in the town, about the people she knows and those she does not know. I admit her chatter interests me: one feels a little bit in the swim of things after a 'lesson' at Emmy's. But afterwards I have a curious sick feeling, when I think of her slimy besmirching of everybody; I feel dirty mentally and physically, and long for a bath inside and out.

While I was playing with her two dear little girls I heard Emmy—who was chattering to some like-minded friends—mention Alfred Mörch's name. I won't deny I grew curious, and that my thoughts wandered away from the game. With one ear I listened to the whispered confidences of the gossips, who put their heads together and looked very impressed and indignantly delighted.

What I caught of the conversation was the following: Alfred Mörch had seduced

a young girl, who had since gone mad, and whose brother had sworn to kill him. The story was quite true, for my cousin had heard it from a lady, whose charwoman was the aunt of the servant of the young girl's parents. But this was not all. Mr. Mörch had many other crimes on his conscience. 'No woman can resist him,' said Emmy with an expression of gloating interest in her face. At this point of the conversation I asked, 'What does it mean that no woman can resist this Mr. Mörch? What is this mysterious power he possesses?'

'Yes, my dear girl, you better take care,' answered Emmy. 'I'll tell you what they say about Alfred Mörch. He hypnotises the women he is interested in by looking very intently at them with his shiny black eyes. He also has a curious way of taking their hands; they say it is like a warm stream rushing through their veins the moment he touches them.'

Though I found Emmy's description

of this naughty Mr. Mörch extremely ridiculous, it was with a certain amount of anxiety I thought of my meeting with him in the morning. Of course, I showed no concern, and asked in a careless voice, 'Who is he really, this terrible Don Juan? Where does he come from? Surely as an actor he is not very well known.'

Then I heard the following romantic tale. It had been said that his parents were middle-class people in a provincial town. But that in reality his father was a very distinguished man, and his mother, who was now dead, had been governess in the house of a foreign diplomat. But this much was certain, that from the time Mörch came to Copenhagen as a young student, he had had plenty of money and had a great number of influential friends. He had first studied for the Bar, but for the last two years he had been on the stage. Some thought he had great talent, but most people could not stand him as an actor.

'I thought him excellent in *Suleima*,' I was stupid enough to remark.

'Good heavens, child, he has not half a dozen words to say in *Suleima*.'

'But perhaps he uses his eyes so much the more,' added one of the other chatter-boxes.

This made them all laugh, and I forced myself to laugh too. I had a feeling there was something for me to hide, and altogether felt very dissatisfied with myself.

But Emmy patted me on the cheek with her clammy hand, and said, 'Yes, you darling child, beware of those dangerous eyes.'

On the whole it was a horrid day. I had a feeling I had been in bad company, that I had been roughly handled and had not even had pride enough to defend myself. I could cry with humiliation. But I will now cleanse my thoughts by reading before falling asleep. I will read E. P. Jacobson's beautiful poem about King Volmer and his love:

'All my roses I have kissed to death,
While my thoughts flew forth to you.'

20th OF JAN.

ERIK will be here in a week's time. I had a letter from him this morning. It is certainly high time that he came, for I am going about here allowing my mind to get more and more influenced by morbid thoughts.

But this is now going to end. Erik will be here bringing sanity and health. We will have a nice confidential talk, and I will tell him straight out that it is best for us both to marry soon. It won't do for me any longer to try to make up for the meagre fare of realities by feeding on the unsubstantial dreams of mother's and my own fancies.

Yes, it will be good to get out of all this, to be replanted in a strong and loving earth, to feel one has something to live for, to feel one has one's own cosy home,

where one can breathe freely, and where the air is not full of bitterness and gloom, broken hopes, everyday's petty worries.

Even not having daily to look at mother's sad face will be a comfort. You darling mother, I know it is horrid of me to feel like this. Yet you would forgive me, if you knew in what state of mind I am, and how my young soul is tearing itself to pieces like a caged animal. I must get free one way or another. It will end in my doing something very foolish if my hope in Erik fails. No, no, this must not happen. Your name, Erik, is the talisman I use against all evil temptations. Also against the dark eyes, which now haunt my dreams. The dark eyes which I despise and laugh at, but which never leave me alone. Just as I fancy I have conquered them, they suddenly shine out at me from nooks and corners, from the folds in the curtain, from the darkness in my room where I lie awake at night. Their radiance burns. Suddenly they are there,

coming nearer and nearer. They are serious and commanding, they watch me with a sure and quiet force. They say to me 'come.' They have been so near to me that I have felt their glance scorch my own eyes, and I have caught myself starting up to follow.

But this is madness. I have again and again said to myself: What have these eyes to do with me? Why do they haunt me?

I meet a man I don't know. He looks at me and I behave like a silly little school-girl. I listen to the idle chatter of some foolish women. . . . Well, what then? Surely that ought to finish the story, but no, it only begins it. Though this is not quite true. Those eyes have haunted me since the evening I saw *Suleima*. Now I understand it, it was the eyes which conquered *Suleima*. I don't remember at all how he looked, I don't even remember the sound of his voice.

Surely, Julie, you are well on the way to

madness, and it is high time that Erik returned. I greet you, dear friend, I greet your dear steadfast blue eyes.

23rd OF JAN.

THIS morning I went into the attic to get some linen out of a chest. When I was turning the things over I came across a big black veil. I have never seen one so closely woven, and it was made in the shape of a hood. I put it on and could hardly see through it, and when I glanced at myself in the old mirror hanging on the wall I looked exactly like a hooded nun.

I wonder why mother got this veil and what she used it for?

I meant to have asked her to-night, but when it came to the point somehow I did not do it.

26th OF JAN.

I SAT at the window after lunch. The snow was falling gently in big, soft flakes, just what I always call a real Christmas snow—like myriads and myriads of white winter-birds slowly descending to earth. Along the deserted road came a carriage with white hood and white coachman, making two black lines in the white snow. The carriage stopped outside our neighbour's house. It was the 'favourite's' coupé. She jumped out, and had almost reached the door, when she suddenly turned round, threw back her veil and called out an order to the coachman, who had already started on his return journey. I had only the merest glimpse of her, but I shall never forget it. I cannot forget the radiance of victorious happiness which shone from her face and figure. The black fur coat stood open, and she wore a large bunch of pale pink roses. Her face itself was like a pink rose, peeping out from its frame of black lace.

With the one hand she gracefully lifted her dress, with the other—her glove was pale yellow—she held aside her veil. The snow-birds fluttered down round her; she stood there like spring itself in the snow, so warm and young, so fair and fine.

Then the charming sight disappeared and the street door closed after her.

But suddenly it struck me that it was the first time I had seen her arrive in broad daylight, and that for the last week I had not seen the other young girl, who usually visited our neighbour after lunch.

Was she ill, or had she gone away, or was it all over? Was the door pitilessly closed and was her rival sole favourite? I looked out upon the ugly black lines drawn by the carriage on the white snow, I watched them slowly being filled with the caressing, covering flakes until they seemed only like faintly remaining scars.

29th OF JAN.

ERIK has come. He called for a moment last night, and to-day he has been here to dinner. The dear boy! how happy he seemed to be with us all again and how little he is changed. Life in the big towns has certainly not spoiled him or made him think less of his old home. He seems just as bright and boyish, just as good-looking and sane, but also just as careless about his personal appearance. The only difference I could discover was that his reddish-brown beard is pointed after the French fashion, that his hair is so closely cropped it looks like a field of stubble, and that his moustache had grown and was waxed at the end. But his coat hangs crookedly as usual, with the left hand pocket bulging from his old habit of thrusting his hand into it, and his collar and tie were as schoolboy-looking as ever, a turn-down collar and tiny, ready-made black tie.

He certainly needs feminine supervision. If Heaven has chosen me for this duty I swear I shall soon make him look different. He is good material and could soon be made quite smart-looking. I should like to turn him out a good specimen of modern progress—smart, yet with a certain quiet elegance. He should always wear a well cut tail-coat with expectant buttonhole, dark, finely-striped trousers, shining top hat, brown English gloves, and high, stand-up collar.

Yes, my dear boy, if it rests with me, you shall soon be made beautiful. Just wait! There cannot be two opinions that our dinner to-day was quite gay. Even his majesty, cross papa, was graciously pleased to be in decent humour. He had quite an attack of tenderness for me—this showed itself by his pinching my cheek with two long fingers and with a glimmer of a smile behind the glasses, when he said, 'Well, so the professor's daughter

need no longer sit alone in the drawing-room, humming the song she had learnt by heart.'

The dinner was very good, and we had lots of red Italian wine, a relic of father's gay Roman nights. Erik was wonderful. He talked and talked as if it was really a happy party. Father laughed and gurgled till it sounded as if water was running through a stopped-up pipe, when Erik told him of the exhibition of symbolistic painting in Vienna. After all Erik is more acute than I thought. Did he not sit there and curry favour with my academical father by running down the young art, which, after all, is very sacred to him. Well, I suppose all is fair in love and war.

With our coffee, we drank real old Benedictine which in our house is a sign that good fellowship has reached its height.

A little later, I found myself sitting alone with Erik on the sofa in the draw-

ing-room. I thought to myself, now it's coming. I don't know if I was pleased or annoyed; I only know I found it rather tactless and ridiculous of the others to have arranged the situation like this. Erik sat for some moments pulling away at his cigar, until the fire glared from under the white ash. I could see he felt nervous. At last he said, 'I am so happy to see you again, Julie.'

'It makes me happy too to see you.'

'I longed for you so much amongst all those strange people.'

'But you wrote very seldom, and such short letters too.'

'You know how difficult it is for me to express myself in letters.'

'Didn't you make any friends at all in Vienna?'

'Yes. I made one. A Dane I met in a boarding-house where I stayed. He and I became very good friends. I talked to him very often and a great deal about you.'

'About me, Erik?'

'Yes; I told him I had a little foster-sister, the daughter of the man in whose house I had spent my student days, a young girl who had always been so dear and good to me—'

'For whom you did a thousand foolish things, and whom you often saved from the dark room and her father's anger by taking her sins on your own shoulders. But where is your friend now, is he still in Vienna?'

'No, he left long before I did; he had to be back at the beginning of the season.'

'At the beginning of the season?'

'Yes, he is an actor.'

'And his name?'

'Alfred Mörch. Have you never seen him?'

I do believe my heart shrieked within me, but I controlled myself, and said in a careless, almost supercilious way, 'Alfred Mörch, yes, I have seen him once. But I don't think he has much talent, he only

plays tiny parts. He is certainly not famous, but he makes up for it by being notorious.'

Erik laughed, slightly irritated. 'Dear me,' he said, 'do you really listen to such gossip? I thought you were far too sensible for that. But what do you know?'

'I know that this dear friend of yours has seduced a young girl, and afterwards deserted her in the most callous way.'

For a moment Erik sat silent, then he said: 'I can hardly believe it. It doesn't sound a bit like Mörch. He is one of the finest men I know. I am sure he would never promise more than he could fulfil. Another thing is that he may have had several love-affairs. He is—and quite rightly—a great favourite with women, and I know, that he has often had letters asking him for rendezvous.'

'How extremely proud he must be of that, since he has told you about it.'

'No, but it amuses him, surely that is

quite natural, and he does not answer these flattering invitations.'

'But like a true gentleman, he shows the letters to his friends.'

'Well, you need not get so excited about that, the letters are anonymous.'

I felt so unstrung, I could almost have cried—why, I really don't know. It seemed to me revolting, yes, revoltingly stupid, that Erik should sit there and defend this actor. I had hoped, on the contrary, that his presence would have helped me to force the other man out of my thoughts. I fancied I had almost forgotten him, and then Erik comes and thrusts him on me again. Of course it was impossible for Erik to know—and yet, he was so irritating, as he sat there defending his friend with the dark eyes.

And you, dear solicitous parents, how we cheated you. You had arranged everything so beautifully for your daughter, a good dinner, good wine, old memories in the firelight, and then when mama

came in with the lamp followed by the peeping and curious papa, they found the couple sitting solemnly in each corner of the sofa.

Surely it was a case both for laughter and for tears.

5th OF FEB.

EVERY time I meet Erik I feel that the proposal is burning on his tongue, and as soon as I feel that it is going to blaze out, I am there at once with the hose to extinguish the fire.

What dear patient things such men as Erik are. I cannot understand why he does not bang his fist on the table and say, 'Now, that will do, my good girl, no more monkey-tricks for me. Will you marry me or will you not?' I think it would be a very good thing if he would just take me by the shoulder and make me behave. I should like to see him really angry. I believe I could love him if he would only

once make me feel small and frightened between his strong hands. But instead of that he just sits and looks miserable, fearing that I shall put on that weary and bored face which I assume to prevent his proposing.

Why am I like this? Is it only sheer deviltry, conceit, and joy in giving pain? No, no, it is not that. But I don't know what it is. I wonder if it will be right for him and me to marry. Good heavens, when I treat him as I do now, what will it be like when we are married, and I have him all day long from morning to evening—and from evening to morning? I do believe, I have always had the same feelings toward Erik, even from the time I was a little kid of ten, and he a big student of seventeen. I was very fond of him, and was always wanting to be with him. But in spite of the difference in our age, I always tyrannized over him. I understood quite well that I was the stronger, and I enjoyed my power with a

mixture of pleasure and unconscious scorn. I remember especially one day I had worried him more than usual. He was very busy, and asked me to leave him in peace. But scarcely had I run out of the room before I was back again. I tickled his nose with a straw, I snatched his pencil from him, I pulled and spoiled his drawing, and was altogether as abominable as a spoiled and naughty child can be. At last Erik really grew angry. He seized me by the shoulder, and lifted his arm. . . . When I looked up at him tauntingly and said, 'Yes, strike me if you dare.'

His arm fell, his eyes filled with tears, and he said, 'Dear little Julie, don't be angry with me. I am a horrid brute.'

Erik, Erik, you irritatingly foolish man, why did you not give me the whacking I so thoroughly deserved. Many things might have been different then.

What's the good of mother taking me to task and telling me that I am a heart-

less coquette and ought to consider myself a favoured mortal for having won your most excellent heart.

That is all very well; but why don't you win my heart. Why don't you take it with the strong hand of the conquerer, and for once in a while make me a tiny bit afraid. Don't always crouch always so humbly at my feet with that irritating 'just as you please, darling,' expression in your face.

10th OF FEB.

YESTERDAY Erik's uncle Mr. Glerup gave a ball. I had looked forward to it in the most childish way. It was my first ball this winter, and would perhaps be my only one. After all it turned out to be utter dullness and stupidity.

I was furious with Erik. How could he be so foolish and tactless.

Now that it is over, I see it all too well. The ball was of course meant to celebrate mine and Erik's engagement. To the guests, I dare say, it was a disappointment that they did not get the announcement as an extra cracker at dessert, and for Erik it was more than embarrassing. Then he thought he could save the situation by treating me in a way which made everybody think that we were engaged, only that we preferred to keep it secret at present.

I have never seen Erik quite like this before. He behaved as though he were a shopwalker. He hovered round, paying me silly compliments. Yes, he even kissed my hand during the cotillon. He ought to be grateful I kept my temper and did not box his ears. But when at last in the hall he was helping me with my snow-boots, and in the presence of several guests complimented me on my graceful little foot, the foot gave him very gracefully, but very forcefully, a push, so that

he overbalanced himself, stopping any further remarks of this kind.

And the others, Erik's family as well as his friends, came with frequent illusions and amiable impertinences. When a partner invited me to dance, it was done with many little knowing smirks and speeches such as: 'If Miss Magens can possibly waste a dance on me,' or, 'if it is allowed,' and Erik, who scarcely left my side all the evening, bowed with an affable smile as though he was giving the permission.

When the ball was over, Erik insisted on seeing me in the cab. I whispered to him, 'Please don't come,' and he understood that I meant it seriously. I cried all the way home as if I had been whipped, and when I got into my room I tore off my pretty frock as if it was a rag.

To think how pretty I looked, and how happy I was when I started off, and mother herself tucked me into the cab. I

wore a pale blue tulle skirt and long pointed bodice of silk with large puffs of tulle on the shoulders. I love to look at myself in a low-necked bodice, and I liked the tiny ruching of lace between the soft skin and the coloured silk. When I said good-bye to father, I noticed that even he was satisfied with me. He nodded approvingly and said, 'blue crocus.' To-day I am so nervous and cross that no body has been able to speak to me. I would not go out with mother, and have been sitting all day long sulking in the bay-window. It rained and was miserable out of doors—grey, heavy, and terribly depressing, and indoors everything seemed cold and ugly. The rooms looked so worn and faded, so poor and joyless, the black horsehair chairs, the old red table-cloth and the hideous bronze lamp hanging by its thin brass chains. I myself red-eyed and weary, with stiff face and feverish hands, so dejected and untidy. Blue crocus indeed! an unattrac-

tive withered flower ready to be thrown away.

I looked up and my eyes fell on our neighbour's window. There he stood in evening dress with white buttonhole. He stood looking over at me with a faint smile on his lips.

I don't know what came over me. But suddenly I left my place at the window, went into my room, took out pen and paper and wrote in a disguised hand: 'Mr. Alfred Mörch: a young girl wishes to ask you a question. She will look out for you on Saturday the 13th, at seven o'clock in the evening, outside the Northern Railway Station.' I sealed the letter, addressed it to the theatre, put on my coat and hat, and took it to a letterbox.

To explain why I did it is quite impossible. I did not reason at all, until it was all over and I stood once more in my own room. Then I laughed quite hysterically and would hardly believe it was not a dream. No indeed, I had done something

most unconventional, I had written to an unknown man, an actor and a well-known Don Juan into the bargain, asking for a rendezvous. Oh yes, yes, I knew everything that could be said, that it was stark, staring madness, and I am fit for a lunatic asylum. Indeed, I should soon be there, if my dear parents knew what I had done.

Well, I don't care. After all it is rather fun to have done something really terrible, especially when, as in this case, it won't have any consequences.

12th OF FEB.

IT is to-morrow that I ought to meet Mr. Mörch outside the Northern Railway Station. But to do myself justice I must add, that I have not for a moment dreamed of going to this rendezvous.

Of course he won't be there either. Erik said he never took any notice of the anonymous letters he got.

But suppose he went after all. It would be awfully amusing to see him trot up and down at the meeting-place. The conceited idiot with his horrid black eyes. I can see him quite clearly with the fur coat up to his ears and the stock under his arm.

How I should like him to go, and to watch him without being seen.

I think I will invite Erik out for a walk to-morrow afternoon. Then, should Mr. Mörch be there, I am sure I shall never be able to resist the temptation of telling Erik that he is waiting for me.

13th OF FEB.

‘ALL good little pictures turn round to the wall,’ and you, my virtuous pen, make a blot over it all!

I have done something terrible. I have sunk as deep as it is possible for a decent girl to sink, and the sadness of it all is that it has made me quite radiant.

I start herewith my sinful report. To begin at the beginning, when I woke this morning the sun shone brightly into my room. I jumped out of bed and took my cold tub. My heart was so glad, my mind so bright, as though I was preparing myself for a feast. I remember I said to myself while I dressed, 'To-night at seven o'clock at the Northern Railway Station a fairy-tale will commence, and the name of the fairy princess is Julie. Far away in a distant castle, in a big wondrous wood, Julie has heard of a horribly conceited man who every day boasts of having conquered the hearts of innocent little girls. On hearing this Julie gets extremely angry on behalf of her sex. She swears a solemn oath, that she will punish the wicked seducer and humble him in the dust. Helped by her clever servant, Julie sends her enemy this message: that a virtuous and beautiful maiden has become so enamoured of his lustrous black eyes, that she will await him on Saturday outside the

Northern Railway Station. The conceited fool arrives at the given time, sure of an easy prey. He sees a closely-veiled princess—in her mother's chest Julie has found an impenetrable veil woven by good fairies—when he approaches her, the princess breaks into mocking silvery laughter and disappears. Afterwards—well, afterwards—the fairy tale ended, what happened further I could not imagine.

But I was quite clear on one point. I was not going to the rendezvous. Unknown and unrecognized I would go and enjoy Mr. Mörch's curiosity and listen to his ensnaring words, to disappear with the mocking princess's laughter.

After dinner I said to mother that I wanted to call on Emmy. She looked a little surprised but was really rather pleased, and I started soon after. It was half-past five in the afternoon. Earlier in the day I had fetched the fairy-tale veil from the attic, and I took it with me in

my pocket. I went in the omnibus to Tivoli, walked then to the Boulevard where Emmy lives, paid her a short visit—to prove I had been there—wrapped myself in the veil on the staircase and hastened with beating heart to the rendezvous.

From a little distance I saw that it was five minutes past seven by the station clock. I was pleased that I was not too early. I glanced in all directions, he had not come. I only saw a solitary cab waiting in the lonely white square outside the station. Not a soul, except the driver, to be seen. I felt as if a bucket of cold water had been thrown over my fairy tale. Here stood the proud princess a perfect laughing-stock. She had quite forgotten to reckon with the possibility that nothing would happen through the non-appearance of the conceited young man.

I had already started on my way back when—my heart almost stopped beating—a tall figure came from the other side of

the cab. A tall, fur-coated figure. It was he. In a moment he was at my side. I did not look at him, I only saw his shadow in front of me, and I heard his voice saying, 'Lady, the cab is waiting.'

This experienced impertinence gave me back my self-confidence. 'You are mistaken, I do not need a cab.' God bless you, darling mother, for your veil, which allowed me to observe him while he could see nothing but my black helmet. With some uncertainty in his glance, he tried in vain to pierce through my mask. Then he said, feeling his way, 'Is it worth while sending the cab away at once? I mean one is always more sheltered.' I said quickly, 'Please, send it away,' and I rejoiced in my cold-bloodedness. He bowed slightly to me, went back to the cab, paid the driver and gave him a message, and the cab went quickly away in the direction of the Boulevard.

We were alone. I said, 'Let us walk on,' and I went towards the Klampenborg

Station, he following at my side. After a short pause he said, 'Well?'

'Well,' I repeated.

'Well, dear lady, what was it you wanted to ask me?'

Unfortunately I had quite forgotten to have a question ready, and to gain time I said, 'It is a wager between a man and myself. He has bet me six bottles of French perfume.'

'And it is I who have to decide the wager?'

'Yes, if you will be so kind. It means a great deal to me.'

'Six bottles of French perfume. Well, let me hear.'

'I should like very much to know—please do tell me—is Mörch your real name or your theatrical name?'

He did not answer at once. Just then we were passing a street lamp, and in the light he tried to see my face through the veil. At last he said in a cold and sarcastic voice, 'And it is merely to ask me my

name that you have arranged this meeting.'

It was evident he felt quite angry, which amused me. I was shaking inside with laughter, but said seriously, 'Yes, Mr. Mörch, if you would be so kind as to do me this service, I won't keep you a moment longer. Probably some one is waiting for you.'

I glanced at him. He looked rather calm, but his voice trembled when he answered, 'You are evidently very amusing or, forgive me, very foolish.'

I, in an angelic voice, 'How unkindly you speak to me. Have I offended you?'

He, with dignified coldness, 'Offended me, no; but to tell you the truth, it seems to me rather ridiculous to drag me out on a cold winter evening to this remote place, simply to ask me what my name is.'

I quietly and modestly, 'I never thought for a moment you would come, for I have been told that you get so many anonymous letters.'

He, a little softened, 'I came only because your handwriting interested me. Though disguised, it was so ladylike, so dainty and original.'

'You flatter me, Mr. Mörch, but really there is nothing in the least interesting about me, not even the fact that I am in love with you. Perhaps you thought I was?'

He looked as if he wanted to bite my head off, but did not answer. We had reached the park, and at the corner of the Boulevard I stopped.

'I must go home now, Mr. Mörch. I wonder if you would be kind enough to answer my question.'

'Only on one condition.'

'And what is that?'

'That you show me your face and tell me your name.'

'But why? What pleasure can that possibly be to you?'

'Do you really think my request so un-

reasonable. Allow me?' and he stretched out his hand to lift my veil.

'No, no, you must not do that,' and I hurried along the path. He followed me. Neither of us spoke. At last, when we were again walking quickly side by side, I said, 'How lovely the park is with all the snow-powdered trees. It looks like a fairy-tale garden.'

'Oh, yes.'

Snow-powder, fairy-tale garden, and all other poetical things had evidently not the slightest interest for him, and I thought: the situation is getting impossible, he is just as stupid and irritating as Erik.

Then suddenly he stopped and said, 'Well, good-bye, and many thanks for to-night.'

'And after all, you won't fulfil my wish?'

He planted himself straight in front of me and looked at me—looked at me for a long time, I thought, and with curiously

cold eyes, which made me afraid, yet drew me to him. Then he said quietly and politely, but with a lovely ice-cold distinction in his tone, 'My name is what I am called. I trust that is your bet, and that you therefore will win your wager.'

He lifted his hat to me, and was already going away. When—I don't know why—I would not, could not, lose him in this fashion. I tore the veil from my face and called, 'Mr. Mörch,' and when he turned I stood there smiling with outstretched hand, saying, 'Don't be angry with me any longer, let us part good friends.'

I have never seen any human creature change so completely. It was as if his face was suddenly in the sunlight, his eyes shone gay and bright, his voice became soft and cooing. We talked together like two comrades, who had known one another for a long time. He told me he knew my face quite well, only he could not remember where he had seen it.

He begged me again to tell him my name. 'No,' I said, 'I cannot tell you that to-day.'

'Then another day, for perhaps you will meet me another day.'

I did not know whether I wanted to say yes or no, but I said, 'Perhaps'; and I asked him just afterwards, 'Do tell me, where did you think of taking me in that cab?'

'To a restaurant or to my rooms, just as you liked. To a place where we could sit in peace together and drink a glass of champagne.'

'Then you really imagined that I was a lady of that sort?'

'What sort? I assure you all sorts of ladies like drinking champagne.'

'Yes, but not with you.'

'Do you really mean that? Seriously, do you think it would be so terrible if we two spent an amusing evening together?'

'No, perhaps not, if you would behave just as nicely as you are doing now.'

'I will behave just as you wish, you may be sure of that. Will you come then and dine with me on Thursday? I am free that evening.'

In short, it ended with my almost promising to meet him on Thursday at seven o'clock in the King's Square. He talked me into such a trusting state of mind, that it all seemed the most natural thing in the world. But how it will look to me in the morning, how I shall square my conscience, and how I shall manage to get away from home I don't know.

Well, sufficient unto the day. In the worst, or rather the best, case, I can stay away.

Then on Thursday evening Mr. Mörch can wait at the meeting-place and look at the stars. Besides, what pleasure could it really be for him to meet me.

He said I was lovely! What a fib!

14th OF FEB.

WHAT happened yesterday seems like a dream. But my diary proves the dream to be a reality. What I have done seems to me so fantastically meaningless, and yet I think it is the only thing in my life worth writing about. But again and again, I say to myself, 'You silly little fool, you ridiculous heroine, who has behaved just as unheroically as thousands of other little girls.

Yes, if I loved him and he loved me. But it is nothing but a mood and a fancy on my side, and on his a moment's sensation, a piquant chance which suddenly comes his way, and on which he graciously sacrifices some hours of his time.

To begin with, I hated him. He had suddenly begun to play a part in my life, he—a stranger, a man to whom I really meant nothing—had suddenly become master of my thoughts and dreams. His

eyes commanded me, and I wished to free myself from them and from him.

Yes, that was how it happened. I simply had to meet him at close quarters, to battle with him, as one does with a real human being. I had to get the dream-being, the Sheik from *Suleima*, transformed into the actor Mr. Mörch.

This is the explanation, the excuse for my asking him to meet me.

I wanted to free myself from him, and I ended in promising to meet him again.

I wished to feel myself his strong opponent, which I was to begin with. I enjoyed feeling his nervousness, his stupid sulkiness, and his curiosity. I played with him, I teased him, I tortured him!

But just as I fancied myself victorious, he conquered me. I can still see him standing in front of me, bidding me good-bye in polite, sarcastic words. I felt his glance like a whip across my face, and when he turned to go I suddenly grew ter-

rified of losing him. I called him back, I felt it was weakness, yet it made me happy.

This stranger! for he is a stranger to me, though I have never felt such good friends with anyone before. It was utterly impossible to feel reserved and superior with him. His words and his voice seem to draw me towards him in such a natural yet respectful way. There was something exquisitely musical in the way in which he tuned his attitude to mine. The only times I have felt anything like it before have been when dancing with a partner who firmly and fearlessly led me into the rhythm of the music. When I close my eyes I can still hear his voice. Yes, indeed, there is rhythm in that voice, and I feel as though I was dancing—a languid, softly gliding dance.

I hear his parting words as he took both my hands, looking smilingly into my eyes, saying, 'Good-bye, you very charming un-

known girl, whom I am so very happy to have met.'

It is curious that eyes can change so much. In the future his eyes will never frighten me.

Neither will I be frightened of meeting him again. On the contrary, it will make me happy and amuse me. If it was only not so absurdly reckless.

But after all, is it so foolish to be reckless? Who will thank me for never doing anything but what is dull and proper. Why should one be so frightened of stealing a lovely flower from a garden along the dusty road one has to walk. I believe I would joyfully climb the fence in spite of a torn gown, if it were not for mother's anxious glances. Your sad eyes, mother dear, frighten me. Should you discover anything, you would not be able to understand. You would think me a lost soul. And yet, the veil! How did that become your property? When did you have any use for that in your life?

This veil, which whispers of secret wanderings and to which the scent of forbidden flowers seems to cling.

15th OF FEB.

ERIK was here to-day. We talked of nothing but Mörch. Erik asked if I would not like to meet him. I answered, 'No.' I made up a story about a woman who knows him, and who had told me he was a very dull person.

Of course Erik at once began to sing the praises of his friend, treating this woman's opinion with disdain, not allowing her a farthing's worth of brains. Of course, she was a goose herself, on whom Mörch could not be supposed to waste his wit.

Yet I defended my client's case cleverly. I invented lots of new accusations and faults, which I enjoyed hearing Erik oppose.

Poor Erik, if he only knew!

When mother and I said good-night to each other, we had a big scene of tears and misery. I wept just because she worried me again about Erik. Then she wept because I said she was only thinking of getting me out of the house, and did not care at all whether I should be happy or unhappy. At last we both wept in mutual recognition of life's sadness and in mutual repentance over all the cruel things we had said to each other. This home excels in rain-storms. I almost think it must be worse here than in—Bergen.

16th OF FEB.

IN case I keep that rendezvous to-morrow, I had better look out in good time for a 'screen.' For this purpose I have thought of Christiane, the only creature in this world in whom I can fully rely. I have never had any intimate friends. For though Christiane is called my friend, my slave would be more the word. She is

the daughter of a common but well-situated man; she went to school with me, but always felt herself to be of common clay. In a moment of magnanimity I befriended her and being feared for my sharp tongue, nobody dared to offend my protégée.

Christiane has ever since worshipped me with faithful constancy. But it would be far from the truth to say I have spoiled her. To no human being can I be so horrid; she irritates me with her cringing manners and frightened looks, the dog-like respect she, the tradesman's daughter, feels for me, the poor professor's daughter, rouses my scorn. On the other hand I cannot very well do without her. I like to be master over a human soul, and without a murmur she allows me to pour all my bad humour over her head, while she, radiant and happy, enjoys my sunny moods.

My faithful Christiane is like a blond pumpkin. Her head is round like a ball,

her hair thin, yellowish and lustreless, she has no eyebrows, a bit of a nose, and eyes like button-holes. In figure she is a lump.

Yet she is not exactly what one can call ugly. She is only an absolute non-entity. She lacks all that makes an individual amongst the common herd of humanity. But as she is, she is happy. She has no ambition, no wishes on her own account, her hopes and wishes are all for and with me.

During the last year she has thought of nothing but Erik. Every day she sits thinking that now he is going to propose, and is quite nervous, when she fancies the great moment has come. Yet when to-morrow I call and tell her that I am going to meet another man, and that she must help me—she will certainly look a little bewildered for a moment, but she will neither dream of reasoning with me nor of interfering with my plans. She will quietly try to grasp that it is not any

longer Erik and an engagement which is the order of the day, but recklessness and rendezvous, and when the hour for the meeting strikes, she will sit at home with a heart beating like my own, and she will, like the horrid glutton she is—enjoy all my dainty food and champagne in her thoughts.

17th OF FEB.

I AM most likely going to the rendezvous to-morrow. When I have had that experience I will settle down. Again I will become a virtuous lady, and before I accept Erik's proposal I will, like Queen Dagmar in the old ballad, confess my terrible crime.

I called on Christiane this morning. She became quite excited at the idea that we were going to a rendezvous. I instructed her in her part. To-morrow she will come and ask me to dinner, and she

will also promise mother, that I shall be seen safely home afterwards.

There is no social intercourse between Christiane's parents and mine—they hardly know each other by sight—and there is, therefore, no possibility of being discovered.

Christiane thought it all extremely romantic and fascinating. I had really, in the end, to remind her that it was not at all becoming to a young girl to show so much eagerness.

18th OF FEB.

LAST night as the bell of St. Nicholas's struck seven o'clock, a tall, veiled lady came round the corner of Little King's Street out into King's Square. A tall man with a fur collar turned up to his ears steered straight towards her. A cab followed the man. The driver opened the door. The mysterious couple disap-

peared in the carriage, which quickly drove off.

A few moments later, a cab stopped inside a dark gateway. The driver pressed an electric button near a door. The door opened at once, and in the white electric light a most superior-looking waiter stood bowing. He opened the carriage door; a man in a fur coat assisted a heavily-veiled lady to descend. The superior-looking person showed the way up a staircase saying, 'This way, if you please. The red room is reserved.'

This was the promising and rather romantic beginning of an evening which, on the whole, was a disappointment.

I am almost ashamed to confess it, but I was not far from being bored. The fête lasted three hours. We ate a quantity of delicious things, but I had no appetite. We drank champagne of course, but I had to be careful so that I should not look flushed when I reached home. Otherwise, we sat there talking to each other

in most sedate fashion as though we were at a confirmation dinner-party at Professor Magens's.

But what annoyed me most of all was that my Don Juan evidently found the evening extremely successful. After dinner he sat down in a most comfortable easy-chair, sipped his liqueur and smoked his cigar in leisurely and most careful fashion, while he looked amiably at me, talking to me in a kind, uncle-like voice as if I was a baby.

In the midst of it all he asked, 'Well, is it so dangerous after all to drink champagne with me?'

Ye gods, no! dangerous, one could hardly call it, but not very amusing either.

I wonder was he merely acting a part, or is he, by nature, such a cold fish.

Just for a moment after we entered the room, and the waiter had left us, he seemed so utterly different. I stood in front of the mirror taking off my hat. He stood behind, politely helping me.

When at last I had finished by smoothing my hair with my pocket-comb, and turned round, he caught my hand and said, 'Now may I be allowed to look at you?'

I asked, 'Well, is it a disappointment? Do you regret you are going to spend the evening with such an ugly girl?'

'Ugly? he answered, 'just the reverse.' For a moment he seemed to consider the question before he continued, 'I hope you don't want any compliments. You are not beautiful, but you are quite lovely. Fresh and young, like leaves in May, with a skin like fruit blossoms, and I have never seen a mouth so like a cherry before.'

He said this quite simply, as if he wanted to strike a quiet note, but the sound of his voice was so gentle and honest, his eyes looked so warm and happy. For a moment a heavenly feeling came over me, a feeling of bliss, of triumph, of weakness.

I grew calm again, when, in the most matter-of-fact way, he said, 'I wish I could be allowed to kiss you.'

How hideous and stupid this was. Just like the other day when he started by saying that the cab was waiting.

I answered gravely and severely, 'Let us make a compact, Mr. Mörch. I am delighted to spend the evening with you—that unconventionality I have allowed myself. But you will have to behave in such a way that I shall not have to repent this evening too much. Remember what you promised.'

'Yes,' he said, 'that is just the reason why I asked to kiss you. Had we not made that compact the other day, I would have kissed you without permission. But I'll keep my word. I'll behave just as you wish me to, and now we won't talk any more about that.'

He said it politely and smilingly without a suspicion of annoyance or disap-

pointment, and the rest of the evening he was the same polite, contented, and smiling being. Yet how changed he was.

That this indifferent bon-vivant who, at dinner and afterwards, affably entertained a young girl, he, of course, considered a silly little goose, could be the same Romeo who, a moment before, had made the same little Juliet blush—was still more incomprehensible than the sudden change he underwent the other day. I wonder what he really is? He does not give me the impression of being an actor, on the contrary he seems so natural. All the same, I have a feeling that he is constantly acting, and it amuses him to bewilder me by playing first one and then another part.

Of course I told him who I was. I had also to keep my promise. I believe he was more than surprised, though he pretended it was not the case. He only said 'Indeed,' and looked rather curiously at me. I don't believe he thought I be-

longed to such a good family. And altogether I believe that throwing up my anonymity gave him something to think of. Shortly after he said, 'Then you know architect Glerup?'

'Yes, very well indeed, and so do you.'

'You know that?'

'Yes, Erik Glerup has often talked of you. You have a good friend in him and—an admirer.'

'Yes, Glerup is an enthusiast.'

I laughed.

He: 'Why do you laugh? At Glerup's enthusiasm for me?'

I: 'To tell you the truth, yes—I must confess I am a little disappointed.'

Now one must not think that this disapproving remark affected Mr Mörch. On the contrary he smiled most pleased, lifted his glass, winked to me, and said: 'Glerup's health, Miss Magens! I am at all events not disappointed to meet another object of his admiration.'

How his calmness irritated me. Noth-

ing, nothing seems of any importance to him. As he sat there in his easy-chair he looked as if nothing in the world could shake him out of his lazy content. I do believe that if the sky had opened suddenly and a couple of angels had dropped down on his knee, he would without turning a hair have drunk their health. Whether I like him or not is evidently of no earthly consequence to him. I had a clear sign of this when we drove away from the restaurant. At my place at the table was lying a beautiful bouquet. I would have preferred to have taken it with me as a souvenir of my only romance, but when I said to him: 'It's a pity about the lovely flowers, but I don't think I dare take them home with me.' To which he drily answered: 'They are certainly not worth keeping; they are half faded already.' Truly one cannot call him an eager or poetic gentleman.

He saw me into a cab to the corner of

our street. When nearing home he asked me when and where we were going to meet again. I answered we were not to meet again.

'Dear me,' he said. 'Why so severe? I was looking forward to seeing you at my home; you would be more cosy there than at a restaurant.'

'No, that is quite impossible. Besides, I don't want to come.'

'Oh, very well.'

He sat in deep thought. But when the cab stopped, he said—and his voice had again that lovely gentle sound: 'You can believe me or disbelieve me as you please. But I have never before seen a young girl as lovely as you, and I am very, very sorry that you won't meet me again. Good-bye, and many thanks for this evening.' He opened the cab, and when I gave him my hand in farewell, he bent his head and kissed it.

'You can believe me or disbelieve me.'

Yes, if I only knew if he was honest or merely acting. But after all it is finished, and so much the better.

Absolutely finished. He did not even propose a new meeting. Surely that does not prove great eagerness on his part to see me again.

The romance is finished, and it is a good thing that it was not more romantic. Without blushing too much, and in the knowledge that it was something quite done with, I could tell mother, who was waiting up for me, a long story about the dinner at Christiane's.

But think, if he had not *asked* me for the kiss—think if he had continued the bewitching tune—think if he had taken advantage of my weakness!

Are you really a gentleman, Mr. Mörch, or merely a trifle stupid?

19th OF FEB.

CHRISTIANE came this morning to hear what happened at the rendezvous. Not to disappoint her, and not to make myself ridiculous, I gave her a fascinating description of the evening's reckless enjoyment. And Christiane being a romantic soul fed on library novels, I told her that my cavalier had brought me a pink silk mask, which I put on each time the waiter entered the room, after having discreetly knocked three times at the door.

For each bottle of wine I uncorked, Christiane's round face became more and more flushed, and at last she asked, quite intoxicated with my description: 'Well, Julie, and when did he kiss you?'

I should like to have seen myself, when, with my best duchess air, I answered: 'Please, spare me your housemaid point of view, Jane. Do you really think it is good form to kiss at a rendezvous?'

Christiane answered in a shame-faced way, 'I did not think such a thing quite impossible.'

'Well, you see,' said I, out of my great experience, 'at a rendezvous amongst nice people, the kiss belongs to a much later period. The cavalier must pay his respects for a long time before he finally kneels at the feet of his lady-love, and if she considers him worthy, she will reward him by giving him her hand and perhaps her cheek, which he reverently touches with his lips.'

Overwhelmed with admiration, Christiane looked at me and said: 'Yes, but to be made love to in that way, one must be awfully refined and clever.' I finished by giving a little lecture about the fact that the only reliable happiness consisted in conquering temptation. Though my rendezvous had been extremely successful, and my cavalier had been devoted and courteous, I had decided never to see him again.

Christiane applauded my heroic decision, but wept with pity when thinking of the poor deserted shepherd.

If she only knew that the shepherd's name is Alfred Mörch, and that he asks his shepherdess for a kiss in exactly the same voice in which he would order a shrimp sandwich.

21st OF FEB.

THANK heaven I took the letters from the postman this morning myself. There was a dunning letter from my shoemaker. I owe him sixteen crowns for the patent leather shoes I bought for the ball at Erik's uncle's, and which mother thought I had paid for with the money I got on the 1st of February from Countess B.

Unfortunately no. For in money affairs I am the most careless person in the world. The money I got from the countess I owed my dressmaker, and the poor

soul declared that she could not possibly wait any longer.

I am in a nice hole. I have made up my accounts, which show that I owe the following: sixteen crowns to my shoemaker, who must be paid soon; five crowns to my glover, who won't give long credit; and five crowns to Christiane; in all twenty-six crowns. My assets being only one crown and fifty öre and nothing more. I have finished the work for the countess, and have at present no more orders, and the ten crowns I get from my parents each month vanish like dew before the sun.

What am I to do? Mother cannot help me, and besides I dare not admit that I did not tell her the truth. Should I try grandmama? Still, it is very difficult to explain to her; I fear I may break down in the middle of my story. I know of course where I could get the money. Erik would be quite delighted if I asked him to help me. But I am ashamed to go to him. Besides he might misunderstand

me. If I was engaged to him it would be a different thing, but now, no, for my own sake, I could not possibly do it.

How disgusting it is to be a young girl. One is dependent on all sides—socially, morally, and economically. If only we had money enough the rest would not matter so much. Then one could do as one pleased. Think how lovely to be out of debt, and not to have to deny oneself anything. Not to be obliged every time one wants anything to go to mother, who again has to go to father, who grumbles and says 'no' ten times before he finally consents to give the money. How horrid such money is which one literally has to beg for, and which is thrown at one with surly words.

Of course, I could marry Erik. Then I would be out of all my difficulties. Erik would not deny me anything. He would be pleased to fulfill my every wish, happy to see me look as pretty as possible.

Two months ago I had no doubts about

marrying him. It seemed to be a predestined thing not to be altered.

But when he came, I hesitated, and now it seems quite impossible. It seems like throwing myself away. Like giving up all greater happiness just to save myself from the little worries of daily life.

Perhaps this is only foolish imaginings for what greater happiness awaits me. Yet, I cannot.

22nd OF FEB.

LIFE is not so sad after all. There is a kind providence which helps little girls in distress. My providence takes the form of an old lady, who wears little white caps and sits on a large sofa, and is called grandmama.

I rang the bell this morning with a trembling heart. Old Marie opened the door and said: 'Oh, how nice, Miss Julie, that you have come to-day, my mistress has been longing so much to see you.'

I went in to grandmama, sat down on the visitor's chair opposite the sofa. A little refreshment was as usual arranged on the table, a glass with strawberry liqueur and a plate of biscuits. Grandmama sat looking at me with her large, quiet eyes. I told her—a little nervously—what I had been doing since I saw her last. 'Eat something, child,' she said, 'and drink a glass of wine, that will bring some colour into your cheeks.' I emptied the glass in one gulp to get courage, and I began nibbling a biscuit. But it stuck in my throat. Meanwhile I talked and talked, but I hardly knew what I said. Grandmama's eyes never left me, and again she nodded thoughtfully. Suddenly she said: 'Well, child, what is the matter with you?'

'Nothing at all, grandmama'; but in the same moment my eyes filled with tears. Grandmama nodded again, and said almost in a sly voice; 'Get up, child, and go over to the chest of drawers. Pull out the

top drawer, and take out the green book with numbers on it.'

'Yes, grandmama, I have got it.'

'In that book are some blue pieces of paper, two of them are for you.'

You darling blessed grandmama, you wisest and best of all human creatures.

Now I am on top again. The shoemaker has got his money, and the glover can wait till the first. I ought really to have paid him the five crowns, but Frantz borrowed them from me as soon as I got home. Poor boy, he is hard up as well, and to-day I could not bear to see him miserable.

Altogether, it has been a good day for me. Erik came this evening. He was also in good humour. We had the following conversation: 'Do you know, Julie, you are beginning to have a great success. People are beginning to notice you, and think you lovely.'

'Indeed, and may I ask who do you mean by *people*?'

‘Alfred Mörch.’

I, inwardly horrorstricken, outwardly indifferent:

‘But he does not know me at all.’

‘He has seen you in the street. He was walking with a friend who knew who you were. I tell you, he was quite wild about you. I have never heard him speak with so much admiration of any other woman.’

‘I ought, I suppose, to feel extremely flattered, but you must excuse me, I am not. I don’t value Mr. Mörch’s opinion of me in the least.’

But, of course, I value his opinion. That is, it amuses me that I did after all make an impression on this wooden figure that he has not quite forgotten me. Well, well, this pleases me muchly, dear sir.

I should very much like to know whether he has intentionally filled Erik’s ears with my praises, so that it might travel back to me. Did he mean that Erik, without knowing it, should do serv-

ice as postillon d'amour? It is a clever idea, but not very refined. But should Mr. Mörch have had such intentions, I am, at all events, pleased to know that the answer I have sent him through his messenger is not at all encouraging.

25th OF FEB.

ERIK came this afternoon. When we were alone, he pulled half-nervously a letter out of his pocket and gave it to me. I did not know the handwriting, and asked 'Who is it from?'

'Look for yourself,' he said. And added, 'Of course, it is only a joke.'

It was a letter from Alfred Mörch, asking Erik and me to dine with him. My first impulse was to be angry. I thought the joke was in very bad taste, but just as I was going to speak about it to Erik, my eyes fell on the first letters of the first lines and I read a word. This stopped what I was going to say; I blushed, grew

embarrassed, and finally left the room. When I got into my own room I spread the letter out before me and read as follows:—

‘Can and will you, dear lady,
offer one of your evenings to
me, an unknown friend of
Erik’s? If so, I hope you will be
able, both of you, to come before
long, say at seven-thirty
on Thursday next. My address is
number 38 Corn-Market Square.
Erik will, I trust, assure you,
dear lady, of the respect and
of the sincere admiration of
Yours truly,—ALFRED MÖRCH.’

At first glance there was nothing mysterious or curious about the letter. But if one read it, guided by subtle intuition, the first letters of each line, a tiny letter appeared within the letter, a secret little message, saying, ‘Come alone, do.’

It was impossible that this could be mere chance. I felt sure it was a cun-

ningly arranged game; and why should I deny that I thought it a very amusing one. It seemed to me so romantic and recklessly adventurous, to carry on a clandestine correspondence in this fashion, a correspondence unimportant and innocent to the one, bringing secret messages to the other.

Quickly I wrote my answer, and brought it in to Erik. With dignity I handed it to him, and asked him to read it, at the same time expressing the hope that in the future I should be spared his and his friend's jokes.

My answer was:—

‘ Dear Sir:

Please accept mine and
Erik's best thanks for the
rather curious letter you
have sent us. I ought to be
angry, but I think Erik is
possibly most to blame,
so therefore I forgive you both.

Yours,—F. M.

Erik was evidently not very pleased with my answer. I hope it will be more

appreciated by Mr. Mörch, and that he will understand how to find in it that 'perhaps' which, like a balance, weighs Julie's virtue and recklessness.

3rd OF MARCH.

A WONDERFUL, an unforgettable evening. Never before have I had such a good time. Now I know what it means to be happy. It was as beautiful as a dream, and it is still with me with all the vague mistiness of a dream.

I have been in a bright and beautiful world, where everything was radiant, and radiant in my honour; where everything was done to please me, and where my wishes were guessed and fulfilled almost before they had shaped themselves in my own mind. I have been in a world where all speech seemed frank and amiable, where everything was arranged for enjoyment—enjoyment refined and without violence, giving me a feeling of unspeak-

able content. I have been to a place of peace and confidence, where nothing at all seemed frightening to a shy little girl.

I remember it all as a dream, a dream of silver mist and faintest blue.

A trembling ascent up a creaking staircase, with frightened glances at all the names on the doors. Then suddenly a suffocating heart-beat at seeing his name. At the same moment the door is opened, and a guiding hand gently draws me in.

In the front room a shaded light. Beyond, between portières, a sense of warm and festive cheeriness. I am in the midst of a large cosy room. A voice bids me welcome, a face smiles to me, and the voice continues, 'Thank you so much for coming. I have been longing for you. Now, be a dear, and put away all these wraps, and let us have a really nice time together.' My fear vanishes, I feel calm and confident. I give him my hand and

we laugh to one another like two old friends happy in meeting again.

Immediately I am in the enchantment. I am quickly at home in these rooms. Though the impression is one of great simplicity, I have a sort of feeling that the furniture is old and costly, but it all seems to give peace and comfort to soul and body. I am treated as mistress here, as the lady of the house, and I feel I belong to this place, and to nowhere else in the world.

I am led in to table. An elderly quiet woman brings in the dishes, changes the plates, pours out the wine,—everything is done without an order. The woman seems to consider it quite natural that I am sitting at her master's table. She looks kindly at me, and I smile to her.

We eat, drink and talk. His face shines with kindness and pleasure. I never thought his face could shine like that. We laugh and drink each other's healths, and when the meal is finished he

kisses my hand, offers me his arm and leads me into the sitting-room, where many candles and lamps are lit, without giving any garish feeling. A sweet scent of hyacinths fills the room, and I find delicious rest in a huge arm-chair, in front of which he pushes a footstool, while he props me up with lots of pillows. He busies himself about the room, offers me a cigarette and yellow liqueur, and does not sit down before he has asked me if I am quite happy, or if there is anything else he can get for me.

I wish I could sit here for all eternity—here in his beautiful room, where he speaks so gaily and cleverly to me, and in a more refined way than anybody else I have ever known. He looks smilingly at me with eyes which are no longer black and dangerous, but boyish and good. I feel as though I could allow myself to be a little foolish, just to be a child, and to look up to him as to the very best parent in the world.

It does not help me at all that I say to myself that I am silly, and that he is perhaps only laughing at me, taking it all as a joke. Nobody in all the world has ever been to me as he was to-night, so perfect, so wonderful. If any evil or cunning thought was in his mind, I won't ask, I won't know. I only know that now I cannot let him go, and that he did not need to ask me to come again, I should have come all the same. I know that I love him, that I am unspeakably happy, and that I shall pass all the night in tears.

4th OF MARCH.

I HAVE gone about in a dream all day. I hardly know what I have said and done. I remember only that I have felt curiously and sweetly sad, that I have found everything beautiful and everybody good. I myself have been sweet and good too, and feel as if I must

show them all here at home how much I love them.

I went for a lovely walk with mother in the beautiful spring weather, the first real spring day we have had. Now I am delightfully tired, longing for sleep—for sleep and dreams.

10th OF MARCH.

I LIVE in eternal restlessness. Every day drives me along in a whirl of fear and devil-me-carishness, heaven-blue joy, and black despair. Whither will it lead? What do I wish, and what will he do with me?

But through it all I hear the terrifying and ever-returning cry: 'Does he love you? or is he only a little bit more in love with you than with any other young girl he meets on his way?'

I was with him again yesterday. I had hoped he would say something which

would make me understand him better. But he was just the same dear, gentle and bewilderingly sweet being, but, at the same time, so absolutely passive, so reticent, so elusive.

Yet I tried to break through his reserve a little, and asked: 'What did you really think of me the day you got my letter?'

'I thought it was from a lady who was in love with me,' he answered most calmly.

'But when you heard it was only a wager, what did you think?'

He looked smilingly at me before he answered: 'Well, to be perfectly frank, I did not believe it for a moment.'

'Then you thought all the same I was in love with you?'

'No, but when I saw you, I hoped you would be.'

I was silent for a while, then I ventured to ask the following question: 'But if I should fall in love with you—of course you know that is not the case now—but if?'

'Then, it would make me very happy.'

'But it would be a pity for me—for you—well you——'

Then it was he should have said the words I was hoping and waiting for, but instead he only answered as if he wished to finish the discussion: 'Dear lady, that is a question we need not discuss. I can only repeat what I said the first time we met: You need fear nothing from me; I will never ask you for more than you will give of your own free will. I leave the development of our friendship entirely in your hands. I am pleased and grateful when you come here as my friend; it is a joy for me just to see you in my rooms. But (this with a smile) should the day ever come when you will give me more than your friendship, you know it will make me intensely happy.'

Of course, in a way, it is extremely nice and correct of him to ask nothing, and yet if he was really in love with me, would he be so discreet, and is his discretion any-

thing else but cautiousness, fear of responsibility and worry?

Sometimes, when I think of him, I long to hurt him, to tear the mask off his face, to pull him to pieces, to see if there is any passion behind. I wonder if he can laugh loudly. I wonder if he can cry. I wonder if he can feel deeply like other human creatures. In my thoughts I can hate him and his ever-smiling amiability, his superiority, his perfect correctness. He is like a machine, not a creature of blood and heart and nerves. But I know that when I see him, when I am with him, all revolt dies away in my soul; his calm and smiling eyes kill all will-power in me. His firm tranquillity conquers my thoughts, so that I have only one idea,—to please him, to bow down and obey him.

He says that the development of our friendship is in my hands. As though he did not know, that he holds me in his hands, and can do with me as he pleases.

12th OF MARCH.

I AM terrified with myself. I, who have never done a thing without confiding in mother, now lie to her like a trooper. How low, disgusting, and undignified it is to lie like this. In reality I am not at all ashamed that I love him and go to see him. It is the only thing of value in my life. I feel that I am growing through my love. Before I felt I was in the shade, now I am growing in richness and colouring in the sunshine. Why should it then be necessary to sully and degrade my happiness with denial and untruth?

But if I was honest; if I told the truth, one of two things would happen: either that I should have to give him up, or that I should leave my home to go—where? The first I cannot do, and the second I dare not; yet if he should say ‘come to me.’ But he will never, never do that. I would not ask such a sacrifice of him. There-

fore I have no choice, and I must lie and lie again, steal away to my happiness, sneak away from home with terror in my heart, being prepared on my return to be received with the awful words: 'You are found out.'

I lie till I am hot all over with shame. I lie madly, unable any longer to find reasonable excuses for my constantly going out. I cannot understand that mother has not yet noticed anything.

The most revolting thing is that I have to hide my love for him under a mask of friendship for Christiane. To have to deny him, who is my pride, and swear allegiance to Christiane, to force myself to be nice to her to secure her help.

Already, knowing how necessary she is to me, she has started to treat me in a conceited and aggressive manner. With her questions she offends what seems most sacred to me, and with her coarse, plebeian greediness she fumbles all over the dearest

secrets of my soul; those I hardly dare to reveal to myself. I get so angry with her that I could hit her round, fat face.

Even you, my not-much-loved papa, I could have kissed yesterday, when you said at dinner: 'What on earth does your sudden passion for Christiane mean? She looks, Heaven help her, nothing more than a vegetable marrow on two sticks.'

16th OF MARCH.

HE asked me to-night if I was going to marry Erik. I answered wilfully in an undecided way. I wanted to see what impression it made on him.

He answered: 'Erik will make a good husband, which is more than I can say of myself. I belong to the people who are charming to meet now and again but who are intolerable in daily life. I am cross and difficult, and when I am studying a part I am quite impossible. You will hardly believe it, but there are days when

it is absolute torture to me to speak to a human being. My wife would certainly not have an easy time of it.'

To this I said: 'Thanks for the warning. You need not be afraid. I don't want to marry you. I have never looked upon you as a candidate for marriage.'

Later he returned to the same subject: 'Then you could imagine marrying Erik?'

He sat near me on the sofa, my right hand rested on the table in front of us. As I did not answer at once, he took my hand and repeated his question in a whisper. Then I said, or I believe I said, that I fancied there had been a time when I really meant to marry Erik, but that now—'Well?' I heard him whisper, 'Now I know it is impossible.' 'And why?' his face was close to mine, his eyes looked so imploringly and warmly into mine, I felt the blood rush into my face, everything became vague and hazy, I felt faint, and then—well—then he had kissed me and I him, and I heard him say 'thou' to me, and

it seemed the most natural thing in the world that I also said 'thou' to him. I don't remember anything more than that he held me in his arms, and I heard him say, in a voice which still trembles in my ears and makes my heart beat with joy, 'My own darling little girl, my beautiful little girl.'

Yes, one thing I remember, that I said to him, 'But I am not the least bit beautiful,' and he answered: 'You are more beautiful than anybody else: you are the whitest, the daintiest, and the sweetest in the world. You are just what the old poets call a—virgin-flower.'

When I came home, I had to look in my mirror, and, lo and behold, I really thought that I looked quite sweet. I am sure that is what one calls suggestion. He fancies me beautiful and I become beautiful.

20th OF MARCH.

I AM afraid of my diary. Several times I have taken it out and put it back again without writing a word in it, for in front of that I have to look truth in the face, to account for myself and to make it quite clear, what is happening to me. I dare not look at the present or into the future.

I know that I am on a slope and that the way irrevocably goes downwards. I fear all the terror, all the misery lurking in the depths, and yet I am drawn irresistibly towards them. For each step I pull myself back, I seem to slip two forwards. I hear already the roar from down below, I feel the cold splash of the waves. Even God cannot help me, for I will, I must go down. I dare not think, I dare not feel. Only when I am with him, I am at peace. When he speaks to me, the warning bell of home ceases to ring in my ears. When he looks at me, the threatening pictures vanish before my

eyes, and I see only flowers and sunshine, and all the most beautiful things in the world. When he holds my hands, I know that whither the road leads, it leads to happiness. In his arms, everything which is outside him is forgotten, dead, and left behind as the maid sings in the old ballad: 'He fills my ears, he fills my mouth, and he my sea-king bears me down to his palace deep under the sea!'

22nd OF MARCH.

THERE is disturbance in our neighbour's camp over the way. Yesterday the grand-piano was taken away, and to-day workmen took up the carpets in the flat. I wonder if he is breaking-up his home. I shall miss him a little. It seems as though I knew him quite well, and when we looked over at each other, it was as if we had mutual secrets.

Curiously enough I have never found out who he is and what his name is? I

don't know why, but somehow I have never liked to ask our maid, who, I am sure, would have been able to tell me. I preferred to keep him as a mystery, and have been quite afraid to find out some day that his name was Petersen, and that he might, for that matter, be a grocer or something equally ordinary.

I cannot help smiling when I think that, in my thoughts, he has even played the part of a prince. I was only a child then, who knew nothing of life, who only lived in dreams. Beautiful and delightful it was to dream, but it is a thousandfold more beautiful and delightful to live, at least when one is in love. I ought to add, especially when the loved one is dearer and more beautiful than even the prince of Illyria.

To-morrow I am going to my prince. I am going in my sweetest frock and can make myself look as pretty as possible, for they think at home that I am going to a small dance at Christiane's. I was not

more excited when I went to my first grown-up ball. My mind is like the sky on an April day, now radiant, dancing sunshine, now heavy, lowering clouds.

23rd—24th OF MARCH, 1.30 NIGHT.

I GOT through all right. Though the gods alone know how. I had prepared nothing to say, but rattled along about the food, about who had been there and all that kind of thing; said at last I had a headache, and got quickly away from further motherly inquisitiveness.

And now quickly to bed, down, down under the clothes to hide myself away and not think. Sleep away from all thoughts. Though why—why should I not think. Why not think the only thought which is in my mind—that I am yours, yours. Yours I am of my own free will, because you are more to me than father and mother and everything in the world. Because everything else means nothing to

me, if I may only be in your life, if I may only be allowed to love you, and you will be good to me.

You, my only one, my dear one, good-night; my thoughts go out to you with a thousand kisses, ah, may they meet yours.

24th OF MARCH.

WHEN I woke up late this morning —because I did not fall asleep till it was almost morning—I said to myself, even before I had opened my eyes: ‘This will be a sad day for you.’ But in the same moment my eyes met the clear sunshine of the day, there rose within me, like the song of the lark, ‘Good-morning, fair maiden, good-morning to all life’s delights.’

And I jumped out of bed, looked into the glass, and saw clear eyes, blushing cheeks, and a dimple like a kiss. The whole has been a great surprise to me. A surprise that I am not unhappy, but most

of all a surprise because nobody seems to have discovered the slightest change in me.

Therefore, apparently, I must be the same as before. No red cross on my forehead, no black mark on my nose. The same to every one except to myself. For to me it is, as if from the narrow chrysalis, which shrouded life's wonderful meaning, I had flown out to the radiant brightness of revelation, as a butterfly intoxicated with happiness. Before, my walk was heavy, now it is as if I glided lightly over life's worries as if I had wings, bearing me away from all difficulties. I stand on an earth which lifts itself under me, and I embrace a heaven which lowers itself over me. Joyous music is round me and I myself am like a song, rising upwards and upwards.

What does it mean to lie? To have a secret so sweet and glorious, that one cannot share it with any one. It is easy to lie, but a lie is a hideous word with a beautiful meaning. What else does the sun

do, when hidden behind the clouds, it lets a lonely little ray steal out to the violet on the bank? What else do the birds do, when they play hide-and-seek behind the foliage of the trees?

I walked through the town to-day. I met thousands of people. What did they see in me? A young girl like thousands of other young girls, who goes for a walk guarded and protected by her mother. But what they did not see, what they were not allowed to see, because it was her glorious secret, was the glance the young girl exchanged with a young man on the other side of the street—what they did not see was that at the corner she took two bunches of violets from the flower-girl, lifted them to her lips and only bought one, while he at once bought the other one, which he kissed.

How splendid it is to be alive, how splendid it is to be young. Let come what may. Let the future be ever so black. That happiness which now raises

itself like a golden temple in my heart will throw its reflex through all the darkness of time.

And now, beloved, bend your head close to me and let me fill your ears with my joyous confession, so that you shall not forget it—I am happy, happier than any word in the language can say, for all the words are made for commerce and traffic and not for the joy of lovers. I am happy to be yours, happy that you have chosen me—good-night.

25th OF MARCH.

WHEN this morning I sat in the open window enjoying the sunny spring air, I saw my neighbour busily occupied. He was packing books and pictures into a big box. While he was thus occupied, the favourite's carriage came driving up. On hearing the carriage, he glanced quickly along the road, and hastened to draw the curtains over the win-

dow. The lady got out and as usual the carriage drove away. I thought no more of this and had already forgotten my neighbour and his friend. I sat looking out into the bright spring day and my thoughts wandered away to other things which were more important to me. I suppose five minutes must have passed, when I saw the favourite again come out of the street door. She was still veiled and she pressed her hand to her heart, and seemed scarcely able to walk. For a moment she stood leaning against the door, then she drew herself up, put back the veil from a face uncannily white, and crossed the road—I now stood up to watch her—and looked up at our neighbour's windows.

Was it imagination, or was it fancy, but I seemed to hear a mocking, threatening laugh. Then the figure disappeared along the road.

My bright spring mood had vanished. I could not get out of my thoughts the pale and tortured face with its impotent,

almost absurd, defiance, and all day long sounded in my ears the bitter laugh of humiliation, the laugh I heard . . . for I *must* have heard it.

What a hard and brutal man he must be. Yet, I should not have behaved in such an undignified way in her place. If his infatuation had passed, surely she must have noticed it. Even if he had not wished to speak out, she ought to have forced him to tell her the truth. This I know, that if the day should come when I feel he is growing tired, that moment I shall leave him. I shall never allow him to feel our relationship a bore. I am too proud to live on his mercy, and pity. Not even a complaint shall he hear. I will disappear from his life and nothing shall ever remind him of me.

I am glad I am not going to see him again to-night. I have been so miserable all day, I fear I should have burst into tears.

And I, who ought to surprise him by

being such a bright and happy girl. I must try to sleep away all the ugly thoughts.

26th OF MARCH.

THIS morning, two vans carried away our neighbour's furniture, and he followed in a cab. Just before he was going to leave, he came to the window and looked over to me. He tried evidently to catch my eye, to send me a mute good-bye. But I pretended not to see him.

Now he has gone and the flat is empty. I am very glad. I feel as if a nightmare had been lifted from my heart and again I breathe freely.

And to-night I shall regain my happiness in his arms.

1st OF APRIL.

MY dearest love, this letter, which you'll never see, shall tell you all the words which die on my lips when I

am with you, die because they seem to childish and silly for you—you wise and prudent man.

Here, where you are only present in my soul, here I can speak to you, without fearing to meet the ironical smile in the corner of your mouth, the smile I suppose you are very proud of, because it raises you so high above a little ignorant loving girl.

Anyhow I must tell you how and why I became yours.

In reality you don't know me at all. You have every reason to think badly of me, for the way in which I came to you was as though I was merely saying, 'Here I am, please, take me.' I became yours because instinctively you understood me. At all events you understood so much as to realise that you had met a little being whom it was necessary not to frighten, whom you had to treat as something very fragile. The first time I was with you I always sat ready to fly away at the

slightest surprise. A hasty word, a too violent caress, and I should have flown. The words you did not speak were those which conquered me. I don't think you know me in the least. Now I am yours, and I will continue to be yours, as long as you will have me. But if you think that it is your kisses and your caresses which make me yours, then you are highly mistaken. I am no Miss Goody-Goody, no angelic prude. I drink your kisses as joyfully as the fern drinks the summer dew. I am yours with desire and with joy. I am yours because I want to be yours. I don't want to be like quicksilver, which disappears in your hands. Dear lord and master, all that is mine I give you without sophistry and reservation. But what I should like you to understand is this: I could quite well do without your caresses, my love would be quite as strong without them. It would hurt me to think that you took me for a little Miss Light-of-love, a little Miss Kiss-in-

the-corner, who came to you with warm blood and reckless desires.

I wonder if you can understand this, I wonder if you will believe it. All I ask is to be with you, see you, listen to what you say; yes, I would even be happy with less. You say, that often you are not in the mood for speech, that you need to be in peace with your own thoughts. Do you know what is my greatest wish? That on such a day, when you lock yourself in, alone with your art, that you would then allow me to be in your room, quiet in a corner. I should be as quiet as a mouse, you should not feel yourself obliged to pay me the slightest attention, you should only allow me to enjoy the happiness it would be for me to know that of all people on earth, I was the only one you could suffer in your lonely moments.

In my fancies I often enjoy such an hour. I try then to guess the thoughts that are moving within you. I see you then with half-closed eyes, with nervously

twitching eyelids. Your head resting on your hand. But whenever I see you suddenly lift your head, and look up with large shining eyes, then I know you have got the bright idea you were seeking, and my heart beats joyfully in tune with yours. At last I see you triumphantly stretch out your arms with a smile of victory on your face, you re-light the cigarette which you have allowed to go out while you were thinking, and suddenly remembering that your little girl is in your room, you come over to her, take her hand in yours, and say how glad you are that she is with you, and how awfully good and dear she has been, not disturbing you in the least.

Do you never, never think that it is this way that I love you, or do you not care to know? Are you afraid that I shall love you too much?

Do you never realise how hard it is for me to part from you the evenings I have been with you? You must not think me a

designing little person, for whom it is quite a usual thing to play tricks right under her parents' noses, and for whom it is a special pleasure after she has been out enjoying her secret meetings to invent a new story with which to deceive her mother.

No, dearest, you must not think of me like that. Certainly there is nothing in the world I would not do to be able to come to you. I don't complain. I don't want you to think I consider my happiness too dearly bought. On the other hand I should not like you to think that I take it all too lightly.

Then there are the days between our meetings. Of course you are unable to understand that three or four days can be an eternity. You have so many things to interest you. Your work, your pleasures, your life is in a world where every hour of the day brings new nourishment, new material. But when I am away from you existence closes round me like

prison walls, whose only warmth is my longing for you, whose only colouring is my memory of your brightness. But how should you be able to understand anything of all this. You, who only see a happy face come and go, who know nothing of the life which belongs to the happy face from the moment it nods a smiling farewell until it next laughs a joyful greeting to you.

But should your thoughts ever, when I am away from you, try to follow me, and had they the power to see through doors and walls, they would see the happy face changed into a picture of doleful misery. I don't know how it is, it may be wrong and ungrateful of me, but the first day's radiant happiness, which carried me over all worries and shed a golden light on everything round me, has vanished, giving place to moodiness and fear, which only now and again changes into nervous merriment and the desire for excitement and noise around me. Never before has

my own home seemed so poor, and cold, and grey, as when I return from playing the mistress of your house. As we sit eating our dinner in mournful dulness, there rises within me a sudden longing, a feeling of loneliness, and I have to bite my lips together to keep myself from bursting into tears.

But in the twilight, it is generally worst, when I sit huddled up in my corner of the window. Then the doubts come stealing out, pushing their clammy, rat-like snouts into my mind, Where is he now? Who is with him? Is he at a party with charming and fascinating women? Is he looking at them with love in his eyes, as when he bends over me? Is his voice gentle and bewitching, as when he whispers to me? What am I to him now? Does he give me a thought, or does he in other arms forget his Julie?

I know, dear one, I have no right to ask for accounts; you have never promised me faithfulness, and I love you too

much ever to ask it. We made no contract and no conditions when I gave myself to you, and of course I ought to have known that I was not the only one.

I don't ask for more now. Only I wish you to understand that I need you terribly, and that you must be good to me. I have to live for days on the few hours' happiness with you. And should it happen, as it did last time, that you say something cold or teasing, the words freeze into my heart, and everything seems hopeless until I see you again.

If I should send you this letter you would be unable to hide your ironical smile. You would say I was a fool, and for the moment I should agree with you—because I always agree with you for the moment—but afterwards your smile would make me desperately miserable.

You only want me as a happy face, a diversion now and again. While I am so recklessly yours I can do nothing—know nothing—be nothing, without you.

That is the reason this letter stays in my diary.

JULIE.

3rd OF APRIL.

THAT which had to come has come. Erik and I have said good-bye to each other.

I am glad it is over, and that it happened so quietly and nicely. I feel it a relief; that I no longer have to dread Erik's astonished, inquiring, reproachful glances.

He had noticed that I was changing towards him. He felt that I was drifting further and further away from him,—without knowing why. I am glad that it is over. It was so hideous, it hurt me. It infuriated me to unjust hatred, made me act in a low and unworthy way.

When I was a half-grown girl I had a dog. I was capricious, and did not always treat it well, yet it loved me. One day it happened that when, in the usual way, it rubbed itself affectionately against

me, I sent it roughly away. It slunk away to the corner by the fireplace, where it lay down with its head between its front paws. But every moment it looked at me, and suddenly it stood again in front of me, staring at me with eyes that seemed to say: Why do you treat me so harshly?

I remember there were days when these mute, accusing eyes aroused in me a perfect fury. I could have killed the dog. The same feeling I have had during the last few weeks for Erik. With what right did his eyes call me to account? What right had they to interfere with my mode of life like an accusing conscience?

But the worst and most painful thing was, that every time of late we have met, Erik and I have been forced by curious fatality to speak of him. No matter what subject we started we always ended by discussing him. Every time Erik came I said to myself: to-day his name shall not be mentioned. Then we started talking heavily and laboriously, or with forced

gaiety; we talked about wind and weather, about friends and acquaintances—*his* name sounded in my ears, *his* name stood in Erik's eyes, was on his lips. It was hopeless to flutter any longer; suddenly the name was mentioned, the flame had caught us. And once again the miserable comedy was played. Erik, who understood nothing, and acted like a blind man, defended his friend, while I attacked him. No, it was quite unbearable. Fortunately it is all over now.

It happened this morning. Erik knew that to-day mother would go to church alone. I heard the bell ring. It was he.

He was pale, yet very hot, and sat wiping the perspiration from his face. We had exchanged some commonplaces, when he said (I sat by the window, he near the round table in the middle of the room), 'Do oblige me, Julie, by moving over here. I have something to talk to you about.'

'And can't you do that from a distance?'

'No, be a dear, and do as I ask you.' I sat down near him, and there was a pause. I believe we were both feeling equally ill at ease.

He took my hand, it was as cold as ice, while his was moist and trembling. He looked at me seriously and tenderly, and said in a quiet voice, 'I have come, Julie, to ask you if you will be my wife?'

The question came so suddenly, and was so unexpected, that I could not immediately find an answer.

He continued: 'You see, I cannot stand this any longer. I have waited and waited because I did not dare to ask. It seemed to me that there was hope as long as I had no answer. But now I must have certainty. Whatever the answer is, it will be better for me than the suspense and anxiety of the past weeks. You must answer me quite frankly; *that*, Julie, is the only thing I demand of you. Will you be my wife?'

I had regained my composure, and I

answered as kindly as I could, but quite firmly. 'Did you really need to ask, Erik. I hardly think so. No, Erik, I cannot be your wife.'

He let my hand go, and sat some moments in deep thought before saying, 'But last winter, Julie, when I wrote that I was coming back?'

'Yes, Erik, then it was different.'

He stood up. 'Well, then it is as I thought. I won't ask. You owe me no explanations. Perhaps I even prefer to know nothing. And now, good-bye, little foster-sister. I hope you will be very happy.'

He bent over me and I felt his lips on my forehead, and while I sat there without moving, I heard the door bang after him.

Later, of course, I wept many bitter tears. Yet I felt relieved. It seemed to me as if a black cloud had rolled away from my sky, as if a heavy burden had fallen from my mind.

Erik has left. I shall no longer meet his sad eyes like an evil conscience. And I can again think of him with kindness and love. I have never seen him so handsome and manly as when he stood up to go, after having had his answer. No tears, no reproaches, no anger in his eyes, only a gentle, sad, understanding smile.

How far prouder and better men are than we women-folk.

4th OF APRIL.

THERE is a photograph standing amongst many others on his writing-table. I hate that photo. It represents a young woman with large dark eyes, which look as if they reflected a dream of love and kisses. I dare say they are very beautiful, but they make a horrid impression on me.

Every time I have been to see him, I have longed to ask him who she is. Yet I have never done it.

But to-night I suddenly found out. He had left the room, and I stood in front of his desk, looking at the photo. I did not know that he had come back, when I suddenly heard his voice behind saying: 'Don't you think she is very beautiful?'

'I suppose she is.'

'Do you not know her? She is the well-known Mrs. Paula Hansen.'

Then I was entertained with a long rigmarole about Mrs. Paula. It seemed as though he must go on speaking about her. He was an intimate friend of hers and of her husband's, and until lately he had been a constant visitor at her house. She was so dear and charming, so clever and amusing—I have never heard him admire anybody so much, and every moment he assured me that he was 'awfully fond of her.'

Suddenly in the midst of his rhapsodies he asked smilingly, 'Surely you are not jealous of Mrs. Hansen?'

'Why should you think that?'

‘Oh, because I thought you suddenly became so quiet.’

Jealous, no I am not jealous—I will not be. But if he thinks it amuses me to hear him talk a whole evening about Mrs. P. H., he is very much mistaken.

In my opinion, she does not look a lady, and that expression in her eyes gives her something, well, what shall I call it, some air of the demi-monde.

7th OF APRIL.

TO-DAY I got into a terrible fix. The large veil which I generally carefully hide in my room, I left last night in the pocket of my cloak, which hangs in the hall.

When I came into the dining-room this morning, I saw it lying on a chair. Mother pointed to it and said: ‘What have you used that for? Where did you find it?’

I felt I grew scarlet, but answered in a careless voice: ‘I found it one day in the

attic, and when it rained so badly last night, I . . . but,' I continued, as if with a sudden intuition, before mother had time to answer, 'if it is a sacred thing, which I ought not to have touched, I am very sorry.'

Mother looked quickly at me, and as she left the room said, 'No, certainly not, you are quite welcome to use it.'

Though ever since, I fancy, she has been a little worried.

8th OF APRIL.

IT must be either the spring which makes the men silly, or that happiness makes me different from what I have ever been before. To-day there were no less than eleven—eleven men that sent me glances. Yesterday there were five, which considering it was raining did not seem a bad number. I have never before had men looking at me like that in the street. It is something quite new to me,

but probably it is part of all the other strange things that have happened. I admit frankly that it pleases me. Every man who looks admiringly at me, gives me new proof that he (the great and only one) is perhaps not lying to me when he says he thinks me lovely.

Evidently it amuses him too to hear of the little successes I have enjoyed. But when last time I told him that such a nice man had looked at me four days running, he said in an irritable voice, 'I do not like that; promise me never to look again in his direction.'

I wonder if he really meant it seriously. Is it possible that he is just a little jealous? How perfectly wonderful, how maddeningly delightful.

9th OF APRIL.

YES, I am happy, so happy that I become dissatisfied. But when I know that even the sun has spots, there

is not much reason to grumble when now and again a cloud passes over my sky. I can think sensibly like that, when it is all over and the sun is once more shining. But while the cloud is there, I am less heroic.

That which causes me most of my sad moments is his snail-like manner of disappearing into himself. It seems as though he is afraid of coming out too much, of mentally getting too close to me.

Suddenly as we sit happily and cosily together he disappears, and there is only left a reserved and guarded cavalier.

In these moments it seems like a hundred miles lay between us. Our hands, which have clasped each other's warmly and firmly, slip limply down, and I don't recognise his face and voice any longer. I dream I am with my lover, I wake up to find by my side a stranger who talks to me with forced politeness.

If I dared only ask him why he is like that. Does he fear that he is intriguing

against him. If it was not that I don't like even to hint at such a thing, I should say to him, 'You need not be afraid, I don't aspire to be your wife.'

On that point he can rest assured. I have thought it all over, and I have come to the conclusion that even if he should propose it, I would refuse to marry him. It would be the greatest pity for us both. Freedom is for him an absolutely necessary condition of life, and I would suffer too much in feeling myself a drag on his foot. I dare not think of the time when it will all be over. When I think that every happy day that is given me is a step nearer that great, dark Nirvana then my soul shudders with nameless terror. And yet he is right. Our love is not a vegetable to be used for household needs. Our love is a plant with lovely flowers and sweet scent. It dies quickly because its life has been too vivid.

Our love. Has he ever used the word? No, never, just as he has never said I love

you. Of course I know that words are not everything. He can love me very dearly even though he does not say so, his protestations would be no proof, if they were all I had.

He calls me child. But when he takes my head in his hands, looks deep into my eyes and says, 'You darling child!' why will he not understand that the child is longing to hear the blessed words which in dreams and poems are promised to every loving child. I wonder is it caution which prevents you, my wise friend, from saying the words I—in joyful happiness—give you, whenever you wish. I wonder! for how can such caution be allied to what you told me last night. I stood in front of the mirror and saw behind me your glance, which rested on me with the utmost uncautious tenderness; and while you laid your arm round me, you said the curiously mysterious words, 'And there was a foam of white doves around her.'

When I looked questioningly at you, you continued:—

‘It is a poem which has sung within me from my childhood, and they are the words—there are no others—to a scene I once saw. It was a summer morning in the country, in a big yard bathed in sunshine stood a young girl—never before had I seen anything so lovely—in a blue dress with a little basket in her hands. She took a handful of peas out of the basket, and at the same moment the air around her was like white foam. From all the buildings round the yard the doves flew towards her. They perched on her head, her shoulders, arms and hips, she seemed as though clothed in them. For my childish fancy it looked like a fairy-land picture. To me she was Princess Snowwhite herself. But since then the picture has shaped itself into a revelation of pure, frank, living virginity, and this revelation I hold to-day in my arms.’

I wonder if after telling me this you would have committed a great indiscretion by adding, 'I love you.' But if you are afraid of spoiling the child, and making her too conceited, why did you let your white doves foam about her?

11th OF APRIL.

I AM glad I was allowed to be with him for a short time to-night. To-morrow he is going to play a new part which has cost him much thought and study. So as not to interrupt him, I only stayed with him for an hour. He came straight from the dress rehearsal, and was in excellent spirits. The only one of his colleagues in whom he has confidence, and whose criticism he values, had congratulated him on his acting.

It is very seldom that he speaks of himself as an actor. But to-night I could feel he wished to open his heart to some one, and I believe he was glad I was with

him. I sat quietly and enjoyed him, enjoyed seeing this otherwise so self-controlled creature in such a whirl of excitement. Suddenly he looked at me and broke off in the middle of some passionate words, laughed and said, 'You looked quite alarmed, I suppose you think I have gone mad.' Shortly after he added, 'You see, I'll confess what I suppose you have already guessed, I am not at all such a cold-blooded fellow as I pretend to be. It is,' and he smiled, 'altogether a pose. In reality I am one of the most fanatical creatures alive, but I have realised that in every way one produces greater effect by allowing the volcano to be more suspected than seen, its hidden lava stream should heat the earth, but only occasionally surprise by a little eruption.' Again he grew serious. 'Perhaps, after all, I am not so calculating. But what does that matter. It is the lava stream which makes me an artist. It is that which ought to make me a better actor than the others who either

rattle along to the full jingle of bells, or trundle along in respectable mediocrity, both being equally uninteresting, because both are lacking in the subtle, the mysterious and fascinating element which we call poetry.'

'You are not a wee bit conceited?' I asked—not so maliciously that he could not easily understand that in me at all events he had an admiring audience.

'Yes,' he answered, and knelt before me, 'I am conceited, even very conceited. But do you know why? Because I have got you, it is you who have taught me to act my part well.'

'Then it is really I who ought to be conceited.'

'I am hoping that I shall make you feel so to-morrow night, or at any rate a little bit pleased.'

Of course I am going to the theatre to-morrow. Unfortunately I am going with Emmy, whose chatter is sure to ruin half my pleasure. But there is no other way.

I did not dare to accept a ticket from him, so I got Emmy to invite me as a birthday present in advance.

12th OF APRIL.

TO-NIGHT so many different impressions passed through my mind, that I find it difficult to describe them.

I must start with the beginning. On the way to the theatre Emmy entertained me with stories about him and Mrs. Paula Hansen. Had I not heard that they are in love with each other? Everybody (Emmy always speaks for everybody) talks about it.

I had made up my mind not to be influenced by Emmy's gossip. Just as Catholics, to keep evil thoughts away, say their rosaries, I continued to think of his face when he looks lovingly at me, and repeated to myself his dearest words. Yet I did not altogether escape the tempter. While Emmy dropped her poisonous

words into my ears, doubt and despair triumphantly raised their heads in my soul: What do you really know about him? You fool, who trust so implicitly in one you do not know? His face seemed to change in my thoughts, and grew stiff and cold. His words sounded mockingly. I heard him say with a malicious laugh, 'She is beautiful, isn't she?'

When we reached the theatre, I should have liked to have run away. To have run away from it all, from life which is so difficult to disentangle, from the people who make life still harder for each other.

I found myself sitting in the theatre in the midst of the buzzing crowd. I heard laughter and light chatter from people who had come there to kill a few hours, and to me it seemed revolting that he should give his art to this unintelligent, heartless mob.

Then I heard suddenly Emmy whisper, 'Here she is!' I followed the direction of her glance, and saw on the front row

of the dress circle a lady whom I recognized from the photograph as Mrs. Paula Hansen.

Yes, she is beautiful. Not with regular beauty, but she has wonderful eyes, and there is a curious charm about her refined and graceful personality.

I don't know why, but I felt at once great sympathy for her. As she sat leaning back in her seat without noticing the people round her, there was an expression of thoughtful sadness about her which touched me.

I could not take my eyes off her. I felt a curious longing within me—a longing to know her, to go up and kiss her, and say: 'Can't we be friends; we two?'

Then this feeling was dispelled by Emmy whispering: 'Heaven knows how many women friends he has in the theatre to-night . . .' The music started and everybody was silent. Now, in a moment, it would begin; scarcely had the thought crossed my mind before a terror gripped

my heart, and I felt as if I should faint. With moist hands I squeezed my handkerchief, and I answered Emmy's questions quite senselessly.

The curtain had risen. I saw figures moving about behind the footlights. I heard talking, and round me people laughing and clapping. I believe I laughed myself, but I don't know why. I sat like one paralysed.

Then suddenly it was as if some one called me. A veil fell from my eyes, a warm stream ran through my veins. He stood there on the stage and spoke. Was it hallucination? Did I sit in his room, and was it to me he spoke? I had to pinch my arm to be quite awake and understand that I was really in the theatre, and saw my own love-story being enacted; heard all the melodies which had been softly murmured to me, intoned in rich beauty from the stage.

An involuntary shame and fear seized me. The blood shot up in my cheeks. I

glanced at Emmy and at the other spectators to see if they had discovered anything.

Then I laughed off my silly fear, and sank back into happy enjoyment. I was so glad and proud that the tears rolled down my cheeks; I forgot everybody and everything around me until the curtain fell. The lights were turned up. I heard the applause, and Emmy, who laughingly said: 'But what in the world are you howling for? I didn't see anything sad in it'; and she added, 'but I must say he played wonderfully,' which made Emmy go up in my respect.

In the entr'acte I looked up to Mrs. Paula's seat. She sat now glancing curiously about her, as if there was somebody she was specially looking for. Suddenly our eyes met, and I seemed to see a dark flash in hers. Later on during the evening I noticed several times that her opera-glasses were on me. I wonder does she know me? Does she suspect anything?—

could he have—oh no, that is impossible. Yet her glances made me anxious, and during the last part of the performance I had a curious feeling of being watched.

Then the play was over and we stood in the hall getting our cloaks; I asked Emmy not to hurry too much, I wanted to wait as long as possible to catch some of the words of praise which people said about him. Everybody seemed astonished at his excellent acting, and I heard somebody say: 'Now his fortune is made, he has at last shown that he has great talent.'

Now. Why now? Only *I* knew the reason, and if you, my dearest one, had seen how high I held my head you would have had occasion to pinch my ear, and call me a conceited little goose.

As we were leaving the theatre we ran against Erik. He was radiant about his friend's success, and said: 'Now, I hope you admit that there is something in him after all.' He told me also that he was going away again very soon. At present

he had given up all idea of starting for himself. Poor Erik.

Emmy wanted me to come with her and have a cup of tea, but I dreaded too much her expansive criticism of the play and the acting, so I left her and took the tram for home. When I had gone a little way, I got out again. I was suddenly seized by an irresistible desire to see him again to-night, just to see him and tell him that I loved him more than ever. Of course it was absurd to think I should find him at home. I went to his door, it was closed. There were no lights in his flat. For half an hour I walked about outside his house, then I was bound to go home.

But on my return home, all my conceit disappeared. I sat in the tram and had great difficulty to prevent myself from bursting into tears, while thinking that he was perhaps with her on this evening, which ought to have been totally and wholly mine.

I wonder, did he think of me; was it one

of my flowers he wore in his button-hole as a special greeting to me.

I will believe it. I will not think of all Emmy told me.

He cannot possibly have been with her to-night. Even if it is not as Emmy says, it seems to me, that to be with her to-night; would surely be sinning against me.

13th OF APRIL.

TO-DAY I bought all the papers. They are full of praise. In one of them they even speak of 'quite astonishing improvement.' Only one of the whole lot is not complimentary. They say 'that he was dull and impudent as usual,' and this time also drowned in affectation. I wonder what idiot writes for this paper. I should love to see him hacked into pieces and dished up as a 'terrible accident' in his own paper. But what does it matter what one absurd person writes when everybody else is enthusiastic. The play

was done again last night, alas! I could not be in the theatre, but I was outside when the box-office opened—there was a big *queue*, and again after the performance—I stood in the hall, wearing my veil of course, and let people crush past me. I heard his name mentioned a hundred times, and I went home, saying it over to myself a thousand times before I fell asleep.

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What have all the others been to him? Why have none of them been able to inspire him? If he has cared as much for any of them as he cares for me, why was it left for me to light the torch of his success?

I ask myself all these questions, but I dare not say aloud the answer, which sings in my soul like a hymn of victory.

I dare not for fear of deceiving myself, and yet, how is it possible there can be any other answer than the one which is jubilant within me. It is me he loves; I am

the only one he has loved. The only one!

I fancy that men take love in a different way from we women. They can have scores of love-stories, but they mean very little; each one is like a passing wind which only for a moment ripples the surface of their being. But then suddenly comes the great love, which raises a storm in their souls—a storm which revolutionises and brings all that is deepest and best to the surface. Then they have strength and enthusiasm to achieve their life's great victory.

GOOD FRIDAY.

AT last I have seen him again. I meant to have said something really nice to him, something sincere and tender, to show my great joy in his success. But all I could get out was a dry, 'I congratulate you; you have had a great success.' He answered: 'Yes, I believe I was a success; now let me hear the only

criticism that matters, the only one that is of value to me. What did you think? Was it good? Was it true? Did it awake memories in you? Did it touch you a little bit?

I put my arms round his neck, looked all my joy into his eyes, and whispered: 'Thank you.' But afterwards I told him the same thing in many more words.

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On his writing-table stood a bouquet of yellow roses. The moment I saw them I thought —those are from her.

I became a little depressed, and he noticed it. 'What is the matter?' he asked.

'Nothing.'

But shortly after I could not help saying: 'You have had flowers sent you. I suppose they are from—'

He interrupted me. 'Come, come, Julie, that is very naughty,' and he looked severely and quite sadly at me.

'Yes, I have every reason to be jealous,

and you must tell me who sent you those flowers.'

I felt I was on the verge of tears and turned away my head. He took my hand, and at the same moment I burst into sobs. I tried to take away my hand, but he held it firmly, and went on holding it without a word till I stopped crying, then he said: 'Look here, little Julie. I have several times before told you that you had no reason to be jealous, and you have assured me that you never were. I see now that after all this is not quite true, so I am going to tell you a story which will prove to you how unreasonable is your jealousy, and knowing what a dear, sweet girl you are, I am sure you will believe what I am going to tell you, even if I don't mention names and details.

'Before I met you, I had a dear woman friend, who came to see me just as you are doing now. We were very fond of each other, and I am still very fond of her. You can listen to this without anger or

bitterness, for between her and me everything is over. She is one of the best and sweetest women I have ever met. She has never done me anything but good, and during the long time she was my friend there was never a bitter word between us. Our friendship was bright, gay, and delightful; it will always live in my memory as a warm and cloudless summer day. Then I met you. You came, and very soon I was completely yours. You were conquering youth, intoxicating spring. It meant so much to you to become mine, that it made love seem something new and wonderful to me. You filled my life entirely. I found it impossible to divide my life between you and her. Many days had not passed after our first meeting before she instinctively felt there was danger ahead. I answered her questions evasively, and for the first time distrust shadowed our friendship. I was so little sure of myself and so fond of her that I dared not venture on any explanation, an

explanation which I knew would end in parting. Then it happened that one evening you were here—perhaps you remember it is about three weeks ago. I had not seen her for a fortnight; I constantly found new excuses to avoid meeting her. Then that evening when we two were sitting together, the bell rang. I did not wish to answer the bell, but as it went on ringing I was obliged to go. When, shortly after I returned, I told you it had been a messenger from the theatre, and when you noticed how serious I was, I added that the message had annoyed me. I even told you it was something about a part I did not want to act. There was no messenger, it was *she*. She came, driven by longing and suspicion. I persuaded her to go away by telling her a lie—a lie which I told too gladly not to further arouse her suspicion. She went without a word, pretending to believe me, but as I did not ask her to come to see me during the next few days, she sent me a letter on

the day that I was going to act my new part. A letter to say good-bye. A letter which, with all its bitter disappointment, was stamped with gentleness and refinement of thought. The preceding evening—you remember you paid me a little visit—she had been outside the house, and saw you coming and going. Well, it was this I wanted to tell you, and now judge for yourself if you have reason to be jealous. Even if the flowers are a greeting from her—a thing I don't know, for they were sent anonymously—do you really think it ought to cause you any uneasiness?

This was his story; but long before it was finished I lay in his arms, asking him in my heart for forgiveness.

Yet, it was very unlucky that the evening she saw me I had gone out without my veil.

EASTER DAY, 17th OF APRIL.

I DO not in the least understand Papa. If it did not sound too ridiculous I should be tempted to think that the cross Professor Dry-fish had fallen a little bit in love with his own daughter.

But at any rate it is quite true that he has become much nicer to me. Every time he has looked at me during the last week, he has with praiseworthy efforts tried to pull his face into a smile, pinched my cheek, and in other ways had little jokes with me.

But the most wonderful thing happened yesterday. At lunch mother said that she had a bad cold and did not wish to go out. 'In that case,' said father, 'Julie will perhaps go with me to the exhibition.'

It was quite a little feast my gallant papa arranged for me. It was lovely weather, and father proposed that we should drive to town in an open cab. We spent about an hour at the exhibition, and

father was very much occupied in introducing me to all the different artists we met. Afterwards we went into à Porta's restaurant, which father from old habit always calls 'Minnie's,' and there we drank port. While we sat dissipating in this way, father said suddenly: 'Do you know, Julie, it strikes me that your clothes need a little smartening up, and as I am rather flush just at present I think we will do a little shopping together, and try to make my little girl look nice for the summer.'

We went to draper and to milliner, to glover and to shoemaker. Everywhere father made a terrible fuss before we found what he thought really suited me. Finally, he insisted on giving me two pairs of silk stockings, but when I remonstrated and said that mother would not like it, he gave up this extravagance.

In a really jolly mood we drove home. When we got into the hall, I said: 'Thank you so much, father dear, I have enjoyed myself immensely.' And he said, 'Now,

am I not going to have a kiss for thanks?

Which I gave him. But in the sitting-room the atmosphere was heavy and sad as usual, and mother lay on the sofa ill and depressed.

23rd OF APRIL (MY BIRTHDAY).

I HAVE turned the first corner. On this point I suppose I ought to philosophise in good old spinster fashion, and fill a couple of pages of my diary. But I am not the least bit in the mood for philosophy. What I most want to do is to dance and laugh, and laugh and dance, and wake the sleeping town with the glad tidings that there is one happy human creature in the world, that is to say this undersigned, this Julie, who has to-day, in spite of her great age, celebrated her birthday like a spoilt baby.

When I think of how my birthdays year after year have usually passed, I can hardly believe this one has been real. This

is the usual birthday programme. The recipient of honours is awakened by mama, who to be quite sure of striking the right note at once, has her eyes full of tears. 'Good morning, my darling child, and many happy returns of the day. Father and I give you material for a new summer frock, which you badly need, and grandmama has sent you money to pay for the making.' At lunch, a forced sense of gaiety prevails. During the afternoon I receive calls from Christiane, Emmy, and various aunts, who all bring charming gifts of home industry and a lot of silly chat, in return for which they receive a cup of sleep-producing chocolate. After this the festivities are really over, and the day closes with an extra tear-stained duet between the birthday child and her mother, who asks forgiveness for having brought her into this world full of misery.

But to-day the birthday music has had a different note. This was due, primarily, to the change in papa, who at lunch

showed a joy of life and an extravagance about wine which made Frantz quite giddy and expansive, and even tempted mother to a liveliness which was almost funny, but which suited her charmingly; it was as if she were shy of her own gaiety.

In contradiction to his usual habits and to the bewilderment of the aunts, father honoured the chocolate feast by his presence, and by joking in quite unseemly fashion with his old relatives.

After this I dressed myself in my very best—officially to take part in a young folks' dinner at Christiane's, in other words to celebrate my birthday with *him*.

He received me most solemnly in evening dress, offered me his arm, and led me into the sitting-room. In the midst of the room stood a white-covered birthday table, bending under the weight—to use a good newspaper phrase—of presents, lovely things for the toilets, sweets, and flowers.

He had on his word of honour promised not to give me anything. Now he stood

behind and laughed over his lost honour and my half-feigned anger.

The birthday child had been allowed to choose her own dinner. He had forced me to choose several extravagant dishes by threatening me with chops and rice-pudding. On the whole he turns me into a horrid gourmand. He has for instance taught me that there is a difference in champagne. Before, I always thought that champagne was champagne, and that finished the question. While now I know that there is sweet and dry and extra dry, and that champagne is sometimes called Mumm, sometimes Heidseick, and heaps of other names; now I even know the kind I like best, which he says is a great progress in my education.

But one thing is certain, one should not despise good food and wine. There is great poetry in eating and drinking choice things. Even if I would be content to eat stewed cabbage with him, I cannot deny that I enjoyed very much his deli-

cious food, the prettily laid table, and our festive clothes.

When we had reached the ice, I asked him if he did not intend to make me a speech. He answered: 'The speech is in your bouquet.'

'Am I to be satisfied with a speech in flower-language?'

'Seek and thou shalt find.'

I took up the bouquet and out fell a piece of paper. He looked quite shy when he said: 'You have even made me attempt poetry. Though as a saving grace I must add, that I have not committed the crime of verse.'

I was going to open the paper, but he asked me to wait. I was not allowed to read the speech till we were having our coffee in the other room. He asked if I liked it. I answered him, what I really felt, that he was the most wonderful poet in the world.

Which I think he is, for he is *my* poet.

As a finish to my report of the day, I place his speech in my diary.

THE SPEECH FOR JULIE

'I need not tell you that I love you.

'You see that in my eyes when I hold you in my arms, you hear that in my voice when I kiss your ears.

'But I will tell you why you have so completely bewitched me. It is because you came to me like Eve, the mother of humanity, came to Adam, like the newly-born woman in trembling expectation and promise, the amazing and the amazed.

'I can already see you, at these words, peep at me inquiringly, and a little confused. Just like that did Eve look at Adam when they met, and he for the first time let sky and earth hear those new and bewildering words: I love you.

'Just as you are now, bending your head and listening with something at the same time shy and radiant in your eyes, thus

was Eve as a living young maiden before she encircled her lions with the sophisticated fig-leaves of experienced matronhood. . . . Look, the earth is wrapped in grey mist, and Adam is tired of the life which was given him.

‘A sun-ray pierces the clouds and the mist is dispelled. There she stands, bringing sunshine and warmth; man’s young bride, the woman, who blushes, not because she is ashamed of her own nakedness, but because she wonders and rejoices at her own power and grace, which she sees in Adam’s adoring eyes.

‘She glides towards him, surrounded by Cupids. They gambol in her hair, whisper little jokes into her eager ears. They curve her lips into a cupid’s bow, they swing on her delicate bosom. One hides in the dimple on her cheek, another in the cleft of her chin. They sit in loving couples in her sweet eyes. You, my Eve, who called me to a new morn, who every time you enter my door seem to me to be

the sun-ray which pierces the mist of all my grey thoughts.'

24th OF APRIL.

I AM glad I am twenty years old, for then I have known him two years, when I was nineteen and now that I am twenty. But such nonsense I don't tell him, for he would only laugh and call me a baby, and that would be most improper for a lady of twenty.

25th OF APRIL.

I WAS at home alone this afternoon. Suddenly I was startled out of myself by a violent ringing of the bell which made me tremble with fear.

The letter was for mother; I put it on the table and sat down again in the window. But I could not recover my peaceful frame of mind. The violent ringing still sounded in my ears, and seemed to

say: There is danger ahead. I told myself I was silly and nervous, of course the postman had been in a hurry and pulled the bell too vigorously. I wondered from whom the letter could be; I did not know the handwriting. I went over and looked at it. It was an old-fashioned, long and narrow, envelope, and the writing wandered up and down in big, clumsy letters. There was a mistake in the spelling. Who in the world could it be from? I knew the handwriting on all the letters mother generally got.

I wonder, could it be from grandmother's old maid, saying that she was ill? No, that was not very likely, we should have had a message and not a letter.

But from whom could it be? Suddenly like a shriek the thought went through me; the letter is about me; it is an anonymous letter about me; I began to tremble again, so that I could hardly hold the letter in my icy cold hands. Of course that was what it was. It was quite obvious, the

writing was disguised, and the sender had wilfully made a mistake in the spelling. Could it be from her? She had seen me go up to his flat? No, he said she was sweet and good. Still, when people are jealous, they often do things they would scorn at another time. Of course, it might be from lots of other people. How did I know that I had not been seen and recognised heaps of times when I visited him.

In that case I was lost. Mother would soon be back, find the letter and read it, and I should see her despairing eyes, see her sway and fall.

No, I must know what there was in that letter. I held it up against the light. I could see nothing. With a pin I tried to open it carefully. It was too firmly closed. Then I lost my senses completely, and I tore open the envelope, and with a sigh of deliverance, exhausted by anxiety, happy, but ashamed of myself, I sank into a chair with the terrible letter in my hand.

It was an advertisement from a new laundry in the Old King's Road.

Now that it is over I can laugh. But, all the same, he little knows what a price I pay for my happiness.

1st OF MAY (SUNDAY).

THE most awful day in my life.

I ought to have gone to church with mother, but I paid grandmother a visit instead. On my way I passed his window. He was not up yet. The windows were still closed in his bedroom and the curtains were drawn over one of them. I wished that I could have run up to him, shaken him and teased him, till he was wide awake.

It was a horrid cold spring morning with drizzle and fog. People hurried along to church, looking cross and hiding themselves in ugly rain-cloaks. They certainly looked as if they needed all the comfort their religion could give them, while

in my heart there was Sabbath without church.

Grandmother, already in full trim, wearing her Sunday cap, sat propped up amongst her pillows. In the window sat old Marie with her knitting, reading the paper. How peaceful everything looked, like a quiet cosy convent church with incense and pot-pourri.

Grandmother patted my hand with her dry, wrinkled old hands. I could see in her eyes that a gift lay within them; but grandmother is not of the garrulous sort. She started: 'I don't think the weather is very nice to-day.' Then again, a little later, 'I should not think many people would go to the woods to-day.' At last, 'I wonder if Julie would like to go to the theatre to-night?' Of course Julie would like it very much, and she knew also which theatre she would choose, for my play was on to-night.

'But have you not already seen that play?' asked grandmama.

'Yes, but I should simply love to see it again.'

'Another actor is playing in it to-night,' said Marie from the window. 'They say in the paper that Mörch is ill.'

I don't think I shrieked. I only remember that I stood with the paper near the window, that I suddenly heard Marie exclaim, 'But, good heavens, Miss!' that the room turned round with me, and that I heard grandmama's voice far away, saying, 'Poor child, poor child!' and that I found myself in the easy-chair, a basin with water at my side, while Marie held a smelling-bottle under my nose. I looked with astonished eyes from Marie to grandmama. What in the world had happened? At the same moment the memory and the terror came back to my mind, and if Marie had not had a firm grip on my arm, so that she hurt me, I think I should have fallen again.

My first thought was, 'What am I going to say to grandmama?' I pretended

that I was only slowly coming back to consciousness, so that to regain time for reflection.

‘Have you had anything to eat this morning?’ she asked.

‘No, grandmama.’

‘I thought not. But that is very wrong of you, Julie. It is not good for young girls to go out without a proper breakfast. Fetch a glass of wine, Marie.’

When we were alone grandmama called me to her. I knelt down in front of her, hid my head in her lap, bursting into tears. I tried to control myself, but I simply could not stop. Marie brought in the wine. I heard her come and go, but I went on sobbing, while grandmama softly stroked my hair. After all it was good to weep one’s sorrow out, and blessedly comforting to feel grandmama’s gentle hand on my head.

‘Well, well, my dear child,’ she repeated, while the weeping grew more quiet. But I still kept my head in her lap, not daring

to meet her eyes. Yet the thought tortured me, that I had to get away, get to him to find out the truth.

Then grandmama said, and I shall never forget the unspeakable gentleness in her voice. 'You need not fear any question, darling. I am only an old woman, but I remember my youth, and I know that young hearts may have joys and sorrows which old hands should not touch. But should life which God forbid—bring my little girl into some entanglement she cannot escape, as long as I am alive, she can always come to me. And now, get up, child, and run away, so as not to keep them waiting lunch for you. We need not say anything to father and mother about what has happened to-day, and the theatre ticket we will keep for another day. To-night it will be wiser for you to get early to bed.'

I stood outside his door. I had rushed through the streets, but now that I was here I dared not ring. As soon as I en-

tered the house I seemed to feel the heavy air of a sick-room, and here, outside the door, a sweet, oppressive air crept over me with a curious, choking sensation. When I ring the bell the door will open, and pale and weeping the maid will stand before me. I shall not need to ask any questions. God in heaven, you could not, could not be so cruel. I began to pray, 'Our Father, which art in heaven . . .'
No, no, not now—God will only be angry and punish me, because I, who never think of Him otherwise, come to Him out of sheer cowardice. I rang the bell; its muffled, soundless ringing startled me. Of course—I said to myself, I even think I smiled—of course they have tied something round the bell so that it shall not disturb him.

Steps sounded within, and the door was opened by a stranger, a tall, commanding-looking woman. She said—I think before I had asked—I suppose she guessed my errand. 'Mr. Mörch is very ill.' God

be praised, he still lives! It was diphtheria, the lady explained, and he took ill the night before last. Only the day before I had been with him. The doctor said it was dangerous.

The lady looked as though, in her opinion, it was time for me to go.

I asked, though I knew it was hopeless, if I could be allowed to see him.

'No, Miss, that is quite impossible. The doctor has forbidden all visitors. Besides, it is contagious.'

'I don't mind that at all. If you would just let me have a glimpse of him.'

The lady looked at me a little more kindly. 'I am sorry, but it's quite impossible. Perhaps the young lady is Mr. Mörch's fiancée?'

The blood rushed to my face as I answered, 'No.'

She looked astonished and asked, 'From whom shall I give a message?'

'From the young lady.'

'A young lady?'

'No, *the* young lady.'

I suppose she is now thinking the worst of me, but what does that matter if he only gets my greeting.

How I have lived through this day, how I have been able to control myself, so that no one has guessed anything, I don't know.

I only know that about five or six o'clock I couldn't bear to go on sitting ignorant at home. I went out—Heaven knows with what excuse—stood again outside the house, but did not dare to go up. I got hold of a messenger and sent him. The condition was unchanged; perhaps there was a very slight improvement.

This strange woman said I could not see him. She, to whom he is just a patient like all other patients, she is allowed to be with him, to help him, nurse him; every minute of the day she knows how he is, if there is improvement and hope. While I,

who love him, I, who would not for a moment hesitate to give him my life, I must stand outside his door like one of the crowd and receive what information she, a hireling, is graciously pleased to give me. She bars the door to me, she does not even allow me to give him, my dearest and only one, a single glance.

And so powerless am I that I must obey this person, even be amiable to her to persuade her to give me the latest news.

I would gladly run away from everything here at home. Willingly bear the blame and the disgrace if I could be with him, sit near his bed, and fight with death for him. I have ransacked my heart, and I know I would do it without a moment's hesitation.

But I know also that he would never allow it. For he does not love me as I love him. His love is wise and prudent, and thinks of consequences; his love knows exactly how far it should go; it knows the frontier which it never intends to pass.

But my love knows no goal but him, neither now nor in the future.

Therefore I must be wise and stay here; here where I have nothing to do, where I am gasping like a fish on shore, because the air round me holds nothing of him. His name is never mentioned, and I can never even hear it. To no one can I tell my fear, this fear which nearly kills me, because I keep it shut up within my own heart.

Stay here; talk to father and mother about indifferent things, while only one thought is in my mind—*him*; only one word on my lips—his name.

Stay here; sit quietly and nicely at meals and at work, while all my desire drags me to his bed.

To think that he could be ill and die, and that I should never hear of it, except through a notice in the papers. Die before I could say the last farewell, before I could give him a word or a glance.

So poverty-stricken, so lawless is my love, so miserable its conditions. In gloom and darkness it must creep along; never dare to step out into the daylight and demand its rights.

If you are taken from me in this night, my beloved, then as surely as my poor love is my only treasure I shall follow you.

But if to-morrow you wake up to life and health, if the day comes that I can again be with you, and you will tell me that you love me, then I will laugh at all my sorrows and confide to you my secret that I am richer than any one else in the world.

O God, that I may keep you!

2nd OF MAY.

THIS morning Christiane brought me the following letter addressed to her: 'My dear little girl! Did it frighten you so terribly to read that I was ill! But

what could I do? I dared not write direct to you, and your friend's address I have only this moment learned from your letter. You dear child, who was so sorry and imagined that I was going to die and leave you. You have no reason to be afraid, firstly evil weeds never wither, and secondly because I have not yet the slightest intention of quitting life.

'It is awfully dear of you to say that in spite of infection, family nonsense, etc., you would come to me. But the fever has not left me quite so stupid that I should dream of accepting such an offer. Besides, at the present moment I am anything but a charming sight; and to this add that I am the crossiest and most unamiable patient one can imagine. If you saw me just now, I am sure I should quite ruin the nice impression I otherwise may have made on you. Altogether I am of the opinion that sick people should not allow themselves to worry the healthy ones. They ought to hide themselves away with

all the ugliness and the unappetising details of the sick-room.

‘As soon as I again feel myself fit for good society I will send you a message, and we will then take our revenge for this long parting.

‘I promise you that the desire of seeing you again will quickly make me well, and that, in spite of wild fever dreams, I will be faithful to you.

‘I force all hideous fever dreams away by thinking of you, and during the night it seems to me you are standing near my bed, holding your dear cool hand on my burning forehead. Thus you are—though far away—my nurse and my healer.

‘Forgive this short letter, but the least exertion makes my weak head giddy. I don’t send you any kisses, for even in my thoughts my sickness must not touch your young health and beauty. I understand so well the leper, who watched in wonderment a beautiful woman pass by, and then

with humble adoration kissed the mark of her footsteps in the dust.—Yours, A.'

He loves flowers. Unfortunately the state of my finances does not permit a very great extravagance. But even if I have to dig the money out of the pavement, he shall, every day until we meet again, have some choice flowers from me.

To-day a black-red rose amongst red crocuses. Which means, all my thoughts are circling like foam of white doves round you, my splendid dark-eyed Sheik.

3rd OF MAY.

A HANDFUL of gigantic mignonettes and some forget-me-nots: I come to you without splendour, but I give you my love strong and passionate like the scent of the mignonette. I give you my trusting faithfulness like the child-eyed-flower of the forget-me-not.

4th OF MAY.

VIOLETS and white moss-roses:

My love grows in secret, yet, it is blue like the summer sky, white like the winter snow.

5th OF MAY.

ORCHIDS and young beech leaves:
In the sombre atmosphere of the home, far from sunshine and reality, my soul shaped itself into a flower pale and strange. Then you came and beyond all the weeds and undergrowths of the wood, my soul ascended joyfully with spring's glad tidings.

6th OF MAY.

A SMOKE yellow rose, a wallflower, yellow anemones! Do you reproach me that I am jealous? Don't you understand that my jealousy is like a

burning flame, encircling my love with a radiant halo.

7th OF MAY.

TWO blush-roses and (what is a great rarity at this time of the year) two pink carnations, equally beautiful, each the other's complement in colouring and scent, though so different, they commingle in an unrivalled meeting of love. Like the rose and the carnation here meet in an intoxicating kiss, thus my beloved, I shall soon be again in your arms.

8th OF MAY.

I HAVE been very horrid, and it would serve me right, if he had been angry with me. Yes, I wish he had been angry, I would rather he had hurt me, than looked at me with his tired, indulgent smile.

I don't know how it happened, but from

the very beginning we struck a false note, and we got more and more out of tune as the evening went on. Perhaps it was that I had been looking forward to our meeting, and had imagined it was going to be something quite wonderful. From the moment when I crept up the backstairs, so that the nurse should not see me, and was steered into his room and met his glance, which though kind was weak and not radiant as I had imagined, I was so childishly disappointed that I was unable to say the words which filled my heart. Instead I only found words so strange and unnatural that they even grated on my own ears. There was no scene between us, he only looked surprised at me, and we continued to talk; but while the real harmony became more and more remote, his face grew nervous with a tortured and tired expression. At last he lay with half-closed eyes, now and again wiping his forehead with his pocket-handkerchief.

How could I have resisted falling on

my knees by his bed, begging his forgiveness. But instead of that I said in an offended voice: 'I am sure you prefer me to go. Of course I don't want to tire you.'

He lay a moment without answer. Then in his most polite and correct voice, the one I call his best society voice, which always seems to push me a hundred miles away, he said, 'Do excuse me for not being very entertaining, but I am not yet fit for society, and I am afraid I ought to rest now.'

It was the first time we parted without arranging a new meeting. I absolutely hated him when he smilingly gave me his hand to say good-bye, letting me go without telling me that I was the silliest and most spoiled girl in the world, and that I deserved to be whipped like a naughty child.

Now I am here alone with my misery. The day to which I had looked forward as to no other has been ruined. What in the

world is he thinking of me? A thoughtless, selfish girl, who is offended because she does not find him as well as she expected.

9th OF MAY.

HOW good and how wise he is. A letter from him has crossed the letter I at once wrote him. ,

He writes: 'I was not so very well, when you came yesterday, and therefore, my little girl did not get the reception she ought to have had, and that also prevented me from thanking her for all her love during this time and always. I am, as I have told you before, a most disagreeable patient. All the same, I wonder if you can manage it, will you come and see me tomorrow, and please try to be a little indulgent with me, even if I should not quite have got the better of my nerves.'

14th OF MAY.

HE is almost well. For the last few days he has been out of bed, and yesterday he went out for a drive.

I see him every day either in the morning or the evening. To do this, I have invented a young girl whom I meet at Christiane's, and whom I am teaching to paint on china. Every day I am amazed I am not found out, and I am getting quite reckless and go to his flat without the slightest hesitation even in broad daylight.

But I know that should the day come that I am found out, and they forbid me to see him, I shall leave home. About that I have quite made up my mind, that is irrevocable. Then let come what may. I have said nothing to him about this, yet it is he who has given me the courage to take so decided a resolution. For during these last days, it has become more clear to me that after all his love for me is not a mere passing fancy. I am trying to

make myself useful to him, and I believe I have succeeded and that he is beginning to miss me when I am not there. I go errands for him, read to him, and write letters at his dictation. He calls me his private secretary, and discusses all his affairs with me.

In reality we are just like man and wife. I come and go as if his flat were my own. I look after his flowers, and when I am not reading to him or have other work to do, I sew initials on his table linen. Even his old maid has got into the habit of asking my advice about what to give him for dinner—for monsieur is rather difficult to please.

He is on the whole, I think, what one calls an egoist. As a bachelor, he is accustomed to have the whole household working for his comfort, and he takes it as the most natural thing in the world, that I, as well as the maid, think only of waiting on him and giving him pleasure. But it suits him to be a turk and he is the most

amiable tyrant. When he is resting in languorous convalescence on the couch, and I bring now one thing and now another, for which he gratefully thanks me, kissing my hand, it would not matter what his command would be, I should, without the slightest hesitation, obey it.

20th OF MAY.

I HAVE travelled with him to fairy-tale land, which is only a two hours' journey from the old statue in the King's Square. I don't know the real name of the place, and in regard to its position, I can only say that one starts driving along the King's Road, and in a couple of hours one is there. But on the other hand I know exactly what it looks like. A white, thatched cottage, on the outskirts of the forest on the edge of the lake. The entrance to the house is from the wood through a big open verandah covered with virginia creeper, and in the gable and fac-

ing the lake is a balcony of green painted wood. An old peasant woman stands in the verandah courtesying. During the day the sun shines from a cloudless sky, and at night it is full moon. Across the lake, in the moonlight, glides a white boat, from which comes faint singing of young voices.

I have been with him in fairy-tale land, seen the sun set and the moon rise, seen the sun rise again and sink behind the woods, lighting with its glow the windows of the white village. But to me it seems that the twenty-four hours is a whole lifetime, where I have lived with him in a world created just for us two, furnished with all nature's loveliest gifts, and with a dear old peasant woman-fairy to do our bidding.

I pinch my arm to be sure I am not dreaming. No, it is no dream. On the table in front of me stands the bouquet of wild flowers the old woman gave me when we left, and near my bed are my

boots with the marks of field and wood on them.

It happened like this: The day before yesterday father and mother went to Sorö to visit an old aunt, who yesterday was eighty years of age, and her son, who is master of the large public school there. They return to-morrow. When he heard of this, he said, 'Then we will also go for a journey.' Though at first I thought it was quite impossible and took it as a joke, it grew all the same into reality. After all, I philosophised, if the worst comes to the worst I can only be found out. I got Christiane to send me an invitation for a picnic to-day, with a preliminary visit to her home overnight, so that we, like eager young girls, might start with the dawn. To this arrangement the parents gave their consent and went off to the birthday in Sorö.

But yesterday afternoon, at six o'clock, two young girls trotted along the King's Road. Near the inn they were overtaken

by a closed carriage. It stopped, the door opened, one of the young girls disappeared within, and off again rolled the carriage.

While Christiane turned back, preparing for a day of seclusion, for I had absolutely forbidden her to show her pretty face in the streets of Copenhagen—he and I drove on to fairyland. My question of whither and wherefore he had answered with these words: ‘Do not worry about anything, just meet me as you stand near the inn. I will come with a carriage, bring with me everything you are likely to need, and I will carry you away to a remote and very little-known country inn, where an old woman serves hot water to picnic parties, and occasionally, for fair words and money, is ready to prepare a simple country meal and a clean night’s lodging.’

When I had got safely into the carriage and recovered my nerve a little, I could not help laughing at noticing the amount

of luggage with which we started. He explained that there was really no more than what we absolutely needed. 'In the one bag are your things; in the other mine. In the basket is the wine, and in the hold-all a pillow for you and some sheets in case those they give us are not properly aired. I trust that you will find all there ought to be.' There was indeed, and more besides.

To be quite safe he pulled the curtain over the window. I thought it wonderful to sit like that, without knowing whither we drove, dreaming that he and I were starting on a fairy-trip out into the wide world.

Then we reached fairyland.

The old woman stood in the verandah and courtesied her welcome. She wore a gold-embroidered cap, and a skirt of stiff green homespun. She was a buxom, cosy, motherly person, and called me 'madam.'

Our luggage was carried in, and the coachman had orders to return next even-

ing at eight o'clock. We went for a walk along the lake till dinner was ready.

The sun was just sinking. We saw the big ball of fire disappear between the trees, and watched the illumination of the sky. The beech leaves shone like newly-minted coins, and over the lake the fading sunlight rippled like mother-o'-pearl. We stood watching first the glowing forest, then the shining lake. From the other side of the lake sounded the chimes of church bells curiously near, and yet solemnly far away. From the undergrowth came sleepy twitters. No other sounds. We stood close to each other, cheek against cheek, silent, fascinated, happy.

The ball of the sun had disappeared. The fire in the clouds died away, a pale mist blotted out the colours of the lake.

Then we heard a voice calling from the cottage, and we went in—went in to continue the fairy-tale inside the old fairy's wood-hut.

I only remember that the room was papered in blue, and that it had a sanded floor; that in the middle of the room stood a table with a coarse, but shining, linen cloth, and on the table two three-armed silver candelabras, which gave to the simple room a touch of mysterious richness and distinction.

And the food! How good it smelt; how deliciously it tasted, and what good appetites we had. Everything tasted as if it came straight from Nature's kitchen, the pink ham and the parsley-stuffed chicken, as well as the yellow soufflet with its sugar-powdered brown crust!

We were happy and unconcerned as children, and the old woman fussed about, while she chatted with us, saying how delighted she was to see such happy young people in her house.

When we had reached the coffee, the woman asked if 'madam' would not like to make it herself. I went with her into the kitchen, but had to call him out at once

so that he could admire all the beautiful old copper things. On one shelf stood an entire regiment of red tea-urns, some short and fat, others slender and elegant, with spouts like top-hats.

Then it was ten o'clock, and, after country fashion, we went to bed.

While he sat smoking his cigar, the old woman led me up a creaking staircase to the 'guest-room.' It was large, with low ceiling, and perfumed with violets and cleanliness. The furniture consisted only of a washstand, some chairs and a table, and the bed. But the bed was a piece of splendour . . . dark, thick mahogany, with brass balls and ornaments. It was heavy, large, and monumental, and a canopy of faded brocade was draped above it. With pride the woman told me that her late husband had bought it at the auction of the belongings of the old princess. She lit the candles, bade me good-night, and went away.

I began to undress. I sat in front of

the mirror in the dressing-gown he had brought. Through the balcony door a moonbeam crept in across the room. I stood up, opened the door—the evening was mild as at midsummer—and went out. Never have I seen anything more beautiful. Like a shiny silver mirror the lake was set in a frame of white mist, which now and again broke for a moment to unveil fantastic landscapes with vividly lit trees.

I heard a door open, but I did not turn. I felt he was just behind me. I stood in joyful expectation, breathing quick drafts of balmy air.

His arm stole round my waist, his lips touched my ear, and, like a breath of the summer night, his voice whispered, 'My dear little wife!'

In the same moment the song sounded again from the lake, 'Peace falls o'er land and town,' and out of the mist comes a boat, leaving behind it a golden streak.

I woke with the feeling that some great pleasure was in store for me, and my eyes were filled with sunshine. What is it? Where am I? I asked myself, and blinked my eyes to be wide awake. Then I saw him sitting in his shirt sleeves by the little table in front of the balcony door, serious, and deeply occupied in shaving. For a little while I lay quietly enjoying this precious sight. He made the most miserable faces, and handled the razor in dangerous fashion. If he only knew that I am here spying on him, after he, poor man, out of sheer vanity, has got up at an unearthly hour that I should not see him in an unshaven condition. Ugh! there he's cut himself. I laughed so that I shook the bed. He turned, and, like a gutter-snipe, put out his tongue, and said: 'Yes, you just wait till I have finished, and I will give you something to laugh at, you naughty girl.'

Shortly after he came to the bed, pulled my nose, threatened me with a wet sponge,

and was quite beside himself with merriment, with smooth, though not unwounded cheeks.

The second day of our journey had begun. Alas! too soon it ended.

How did we spend it? As the royal children we were, playing together in our kingdom, which, because it was ours, seemed the most beautiful in the world. We ate the food, drank the wine, which seemed better and more delicious than all other earthly food and wine, and we were so in love with each other, that we thought our earlier life counted for nothing. It happened to-day, and yet it is already wrapt in the faint radiance of old memory. I remember our sitting down near the lake having breakfast—new-laid eggs, fresh sourish peasant cheese and milk with thick cream. I remember our standing with the old woman in the yard, feeding the chickens and hens, and the gallant self-consciously modest rooster. I remember our sauntering through the wood, and my

fear at seeing in a tree an owl, which, like an old witch, glared at me with her day-blind eyes.

I remember at last our parting from fairy-tale land, when the carriage drove away from the verandah, and the old woman handed me the sweet flowers and said: 'God's peace and farewell, little lady, and come again soon.'

Then we drove back to reality and to the big town, where there are parents, and sin, and sorrow, and evil consciences.

When the first tall houses came in sight a horrible fear clutched my heart, and when we met a removing van I thought of the summer holidays, which very soon would part him and me.

But when he saw that I was sad, he asked: 'Is anything worrying you?' Then I smiled, put both my arms round his neck, looked into his eyes and said: 'Let me tell you to-day how much sadder it is for me to part from you than ever before; let me tell you now that perhaps

there will be much I may have to regret in my life, but never—do you hear—never shall I regret that I have been yours.'

21st OF MAY.

WHEN I woke up this morning I seemed still to have my ears full of the ringing of bells, and in vain I tried to remember what I had been dreaming.

The dream itself had quite disappeared from my mind, only leaving behind this sound of merry bells, which pursued me all day long in a curious, irritating way. Like a teasing play of hobgoblins they intermingled with all my thoughts.

Then, during the afternoon, as I sat dreaming of my journey to fairyland, dreaming all over again that I was driving with him to the old peasant woman's cottage, the bells started again their gay ringing; they sounded in time with the clattering of horses' hoofs, and lo and behold, suddenly the picture in my fancy

changed, the landscape turned white and wintry, the carriage became a sleigh, and in the sleigh sat he and I with heavy fur-coats over our wedding garments, hurrying from the big dinner-party out to the isolated country inn, where we were to celebrate our wedding-feast, he and I alone.

But from the wintry sky I seemed to see grandmama's beautiful eyes look down to me, so gently and smilingly, while the bells ring through the air, 'Now is your time, now is your time.'

22nd OF MAY.

TO-DAY fortnight he leaves town. He is going to Vedbaek to stay with a friend.

Of course it is quite natural; he needs the peace of the country, and not for a moment could I imagine that he should stay in town for my sake. He knows that quite well, and has therefore not

thought it necessary to give me any explanation on this subject. Yet I should have been happier if he had talked it over with me, giving me the occasion to tell him that the very thing I like him to do is to get quite well and strong in the country.

26th OF MAY.

WE have walked through the streets for the first time together. I had said to him that to-night I was going to have a look at the festive decorations in his company. He frowned a little, and asked if it was wise. I answered him I did not care in the least. I insisted on seeing all the fun with him, even if it should appear in the papers afterwards.

But I really don't think a human soul noticed us. There was such a crush, and such a feeling of jolly good fellowship reigned that the usual mean criticism was forgotten. Besides it would have been useless to demand introduction and visit-

ing-cards from all the arms and legs with which one came in contact during the evening. To begin with, he was not very bright, and every time he recognised a familiar face he tried to disappear with me down streets which were not illuminated. But gradually also he was seized by the general feeling of belonging to one huge Noah's ark, and quite recklessly we finished up arm-in-arm watching the fireworks at Tivoli's.

30th OF MAY.

THERE have been days in which he seems rather tired and depressed. When I have said to him, that I thought he was tired of seeing so much of me, he has always answered that it was silly nonsense. He admitted there were days, when he felt nervous, without courage and without spirit, and that it was impolite (a word I simply hate) of him to let me feel it, but that my visits were only an encour-

agement and a pleasure to him. I must not be angry because he was not always able to control his bad moods, which were partly due to his unamiable character, partly to worries, in which I had no part.

I implored him to be more frank with me. I would only be too happy to share his sorrows, and surely he ought to know that there was not a thing in the world, I would not do if in any way I could help him.

But when I say such things, he takes me on his knee, pets me, and says that I really must not take his sulkiness so seriously. It does not mean anything after all, and it would be better for me to pretend not to notice it.

But now I know what worries him; it is money.

Yesterday, as well as to-day, I felt that he was very depressed and anxious. When I came yesterday, he said: 'Don't be angry if I ask you not to stay very long, but I am expecting a man with

whom I must have a business talk.' Now knowing how much it meant, I fear I was rather unreasonable. It had never happened before that he asked me to leave; I thought it horrid of him, and felt vague fears creeping over me.

I had not recovered when I came to-day and grew still more unhappy, when I found that he was still in the same bad humour.

We had an extremely agreeable half hour, in which the storm gathered about us, his face grew more and more stiff, and I more and more ready for tears.

At last the storm burst, when after a lengthy pause he said in his coldest voice: 'I must say, this promises to be very jolly.'

The same moment he had said it, I burst into sobs, and he was by my side, begging my forgiveness in the most tender words. 'Yes, but why are you so horrid to me, what have I done to you? Are you tired of me?'

'No Julie, indeed I am not tired of you, but I am so worried.'

'And you won't tell me the reason? Why mayn't I know what worries you, since I am not the cause.'

Then he told me everything. Before he left town, he had to pay a large sum of money, which he owed, and he did not know how to get it. When in an astonished voice I said, that I thought he was rich, he answered that everybody thought so, but that it was a great mistake. He certainly had a little money, but it was invested in such a way, that he could not touch the capital, and during the last years he had lived rather extravagantly.

'But if it is impossible for you to get the money, what then?'

'Well, darling, then it is pretty bad, but don't you worry. I shall get the money somehow. Only it is very disagreeable while it lasts.'

We were now sitting together on the sofa, talking the matter over in a wise

way, and I was soon quite happy again. It seemed to me he was nearer to me than ever before, now that he had confided to me all these intimate worries.

But when I said to him: 'You will do me a great service, if for the future you will stop spending so much for my sake, I don't care either for presents or for fine dinners,' he kissed me and said smilingly: 'It is very dear of you to say that, but you must not think for a moment that you have ruined me. No, dear child, the little you and I have spent would neither make nor mar my fortune.'

Shortly after, when he offered me a glass of wine, he added, 'if you think I can allow myself so mad an extravagance.'

4th OF JUNE.

I HAVE seen very little of him during the last few days. He has been busy with his affairs, and besides had to pay a great many calls.

I have been patient and tried to take my fate calmly. Even when yesterday I went to him in vain and instead of himself only found a few excusing words, I took it bravely.

But when I realise that very soon I shall see him only at rare intervals, then I dare not think further ahead, I simply bend my head, close my eyes, and know that everything is hopeless.

He has not mentioned his money affairs again. I asked him the other day how he was getting on, but he passed it lightly over, saying that it was sure to be all right.

30th OF JUNE.

HE is gone.

I was with him during the last hours; I lunched with him and helped him to pack. On my way to him, I gave myself the following little lecture: 'Now be good, show him a bright and gay face,

so that he can take with him a charming memory of you, and above all he must not, at any price, get the impression that you had expected him to stay in town for your sake.'

I found him busily occupied and in high spirits. He chatted incessantly while he wrote letters, and flew from room to room collecting things he suddenly remembered he wanted to take with him.

He was quite changed. There was a curious feverish restlessness about him, and every moment he looked at his watch as if he feared he would be too late.

We hurried through lunch. I had no appetite. He took some few mouthfuls, drank three or four glasses of madeira, one after another, and said: 'Now we must pack.'

In the bedroom everything was upside down. On the bed and on the chairs lay clothes, boots, cigar-boxes, books, shirts, and ties. On the floor stood his trunks; the drawers were all pulled out in the

dressing-table, and the wardrobe-doors stood wide open.

I started packing. Then he remembered that he had forgotten to buy writing paper, asked me to excuse him for a moment, and went out.

I stood in the room, where every corner spoke of preparation for travel, and a desolate sense of misery crept over me. Mechanically I took the clothes, I folded them piece by piece, and laid them in the big trunk. I bent down, I stood up, down and up, down and up, piece after piece I packed, now this, now that, in a short time it would all be over and I should be alone, alone.

I stood up terrified. No, no, I will not, I dare not be alone. He must not leave, I will beg and pray him to stay, and I am sure he will do as I ask. He won't have the heart to leave me. It would be cruel of him, and he has no right to treat me like that.

Then I heard the door bang; he came

singing into the sitting-room, and when he came in to me, I was again busily packing.

'How clever you are,' he said, and stroked my hair. 'Never before have I had such a beautifully packed trunk.'

He stood close to me, handing me the things, nodding and smiling to me.

Suddenly I said: 'If I were to beg you to stay, would you give up this journey?'

He looked at me in amazement, thought for a moment, and said: 'Do you mean it?'

'Well, if I did mean it?'

Another inquiring glance, another reflection and then: 'I should stay—of course.'

I had got the answer I wanted. Yet it did not make me happy. We stood looking at each other, then he came up to me, put his arm round my waist and said, in the most gentle and tender way, that he would stay with the greatest pleasure, and that it would not be the slightest sacrifice on his part to give up this trip.

After which I of course said, I had only meant it in fun.

The packing was not finished until the last moment. The cab was already waiting. He was anxious not to be late, and we said a hurried good-bye to each other. I stood hidden behind the curtain, peeping down into the street. He caught sight of me, waved his hand and swung his hat. He looked so handsome and so radiant, just as if he was starting out to meet victory and happiness.

The cab turned the corner, and I let the curtain fall. I walked through the rooms, could not tear myself away from them. I sat down on the couch, where I usually sat with him. On the table in front of me lay his album. I opened it and found in it a picture of him as a little boy of six. I took it out, playing with it like a little girl plays with a doll. I laid it on my heart, I kissed it, and called it tender names, and while the tears were running from my silly eyes, blotting out the pic-

ture, I said, that now we two had to keep close together, now he had left us.

I sat there until the maid came in, and in astonishment said: 'Good heavens, miss, are you still here?'

I was also astonished at her sudden entrance. I got up quickly and left, but the little picture I put in my pocket.

7th OF JUNE.

THIS morning I went to the post-office and fetched the following *post-restante* letter:—

'VEDBAEK, 6th OF JUNE.

'DEAREST CHILD.—Do you know that you spoil me, and that I have not in the least deserved it. When on my arrival I was received by your dear, far too dear, letter, it made me both happy and ashamed. I am—and this is no phrase—quite unable to return your goodness. I am especially a very poor letter-writer,

while you, like so many women, are a master in the art of sending yourself in an envelope. I assure you that when I opened your letter, it was exactly as if my Julie sprang alive out into the room, threw her arms round my neck and told me a lot of delightful things.

'I promise you I will write very often, but I am afraid you must be satisfied with short notes. The country laziness has already taken hold of my brain, so that I have to drive myself to make and spell a correct phrase. The only thing my brain is able to express quickly is that I am very much in love with you, and am longing for the 15th, when I have to pay a visit to town on business.

'We live in a cottage, hardly as tall as we are, but the situation is perfect, just on the outskirts of the wood, and the cottage owns a collection of pictures of heavenly and earthly celebrities, which, together with fresh milk, pigstye, and seaweed perfume, and bedtime at ten o'clock,

purifies my soul to a state of open-mouthed childishness. Therefore, without blushing, I finish this letter in the true style of the usual love epistle. With love and a thousand kisses to my beloved darling.—From her ever devoted, A.'

9th OF JUNE.

IT has happened before that I have not seen him for a whole week. Why then does this week's parting seem so bitter?

In an hour and a half I can get to him. If to-day I write that I cannot bear the parting any longer, I know he will come to-morrow.

Yet, it is not the same.

Before, when I walked through the streets, I knew that I might meet him at any moment. I read his name on the theatre posters. I passed his window, and every step I took, I felt him near me, and could imagine him sitting within. For

even if I did not meet him I knew he was in the very air I breathed. While now, I am like a traveller in a strange town. Aimlessly I walk about, knowing that I shall not find what I am seeking. I find myself standing outside the theatre, studying the old torn posters, and in whichever direction I start I always end by finding myself outside his house, where the windows of his flat are blinded like on the day of a funeral.

Every day has two bright moments. When I fetch his letter and when I write mine. I am happiest when I write to him, for *his* letters are not him, they are only the surface of him, they bear the stamp of his reserve, his dread of letting himself go, very likely also what he himself calls 'country-laziness.'

But when I—after the others have gone to bed—am sitting in my little room, filling sheet after sheet to him, then I can feel him so near that it is as if I lay in his arms talking to him. The air round me is

warm with his presence. While I sit with bent head I feel his kiss on my neck, and my pen dances along, keeping time with my heart's quick beat.

14th OF JUNE.

A FEW days ago I went to his flat, and I have since been there every day. I have both laughed and cried at myself, but I felt I had to go. When I am in his room I imagine that he has just left me, that he has gone out on some errand and will be back very soon.

I spend about an hour there every day, going on with my work, embroidering his linen, and chatting to the maid.

To-day we have been busy preparing a festive reception for him. We have dusted and polished; and everything is spick and span. We have put fresh flowers and foliage in all the vases, and I have decided what he is to have for lunch.

The last thing I did before I left the

place was to write him a welcoming note, which he will find on his writing-table.

Therefore, come to me, beloved, the bridal house is garnished, and your bride awaits you. Your bride who has no other wish in her heart than to be yours, and to do your bidding.

15th OF JUNE.

I THINK he was really happy to see me again, he was so dear to me.

But there is one thing I don't understand. Why should he for a moment seem out of tune when I showed him how busy I had been with the table linen?

I asked him if he did not like my coming to the flat when he was away, and he answered: 'No, it isn't that, but—well, dear, you really are too good to me, and I don't deserve it at all.'

Which, of course, I think is quite silly, for he ought to know that I have no greater pleasure than to work for him.

It seems to me so absolutely natural. Then why should he say, 'You are too good for me,' as if goodness has anything to do with it? When I had explained this, he drew me close to him and said, half smilingly, half seriously, 'Would it be possible for you to love me a little less?' 'What a curious thing for a lover to ask,' I answered.

'It is sheer modesty all the same,' he continued. 'I think you give me so much, and I give you so very little.'

'You are (kiss) a silly billy. You are (kiss) grumpy and spoiled, sometimes even a tease and a pig. Yet, you are (kiss) the most wonderful person in the world, and (kiss, kiss, kiss) I love you with all my heart.' After which he forgot his objections to my too great love.

7th OF JULY.

I NEGLECT my diary for my correspondence. To him, I have a thousand things to write, while there is nothing particularly interesting to put into my diary. Like the mile-stones on a country road the days glide uniformly by. Only the Saturdays stand out from the dulness. The Saturdays are like cosy inns on my long summer road, for every Saturday he comes to town to meet me.

Thus week after week I trot along the same monotonous road. Sunday is still radiant from Saturday's sun, but Monday and Tuesday are marked by the signs of hopelessness. At Wednesday's milestone the light of expectancy is shimmering ahead; in growing hope and longing I pass Thursday and Friday, until Saturday's happiness shines through the night's dreams and I wake with joy in my heart.

But when on his staircase, a fear takes hold of me. How will he receive me? Will his face be bright with welcome, or

will it have the expression of effort and fatigue which now and again I seem to have noticed, which perhaps is only my imagination, but which, when I am alone, sometimes stands out in my memory and fills my soul with black, foreboding clouds.

The fear cripples my joy and prevents me from being as nice and bright as I should like to. Then he often misunderstands me; I see the nervous glint in his eye, and I am sure he thinks me irritating and capricious.

But he says nothing. He drinks quickly a lot of wine, and persuades me to drink too.

Of course wine helps. A cosy well-being creeps over mind and body. All dark and gloomy thoughts disappear like mist before the sun; the silly fear vanishes, it sets the tongue moving, one feels nearer to each other, and when one sits hand in hand looking into each other's eyes, there is no longer any nervous tension, no mis-

take, and no suspicion, and one forgets the six other days of the week for this blessed happiness of the seventh.

Afterwards I cross-examine him. He must give me a detailed description of everything and everybody during the past days. In the beginning he assures me there was nothing to tell. His days were taken up with bathing, lazing, smoking, eating, and sleeping. But gradually I have extorted from him the fact that, on the whole, he leads quite a gay life. At the hotel where he dines he has made many friends, he plays croquet and tennis with young girls, and is invited to picnic and dinner parties.

He seems especially to cultivate the society of a widow and her two daughters.

When first he mentioned these young girls, it was with a certain restraint. He tried to give it the appearance that, with the best will in the world, he could not escape them. They worried his life out

of him with invitations and with asking him to take part in all sorts of country amusements.

I was silly enough to show that I was jealous. This evidently amused him, and now he is always trying to put these damsels and their wonderful doings in front of my nose. I know of course it is only a joke, but it makes me miserable all the same, though I am too ashamed to admit it.

On the contrary I often ask him about his two little friends. At last he revenged himself in a way I did not at all like. He started talking about Erik, and insisted that he had all the time been jealous of him.

Poor Erik! I grow sad every time I think of him. I am sure he was very fond of me, or he would not have behaved in such a fine manly way when I told him I could not be his wife.

Now he is in Berlin, and I never hear from him directly. But he writes now

and again to mother, and I believe she has answered his letters.

The other day when he again alluded to Erik, I told him—not wishing to have this subject mentioned again—how it had ended between Erik and me. I told him that Erik had asked me to be his wife and that I had refused. ‘Why, I need hardly tell you,’ I added.

He looked at me rather ashamed, but only said: ‘Then, please, forgive me.’

But for a long time after we were both very serious.

13th OF JULY.

I KNOW it was an absurdly mad impulse, and I was certainly severely punished for it.

The weather was perfectly lovely this morning, I was longing so much to see him, and I thought it would be amusing to pay him a little surprise visit.

I got hold of Christiane and we went

off by the morning boat. We landed at Skodsborg, and Christiane stayed there while I walked along the highroad to Vedbaek.

I passed the village where he lives, but on account of his friend I dared not go in. I sent a message by a boy I met, saying that a lady who wished to speak to him was waiting for him at the entrance to the wood.

I waited about half an hour. At last I saw him coming quickly along the road. I stood amongst the trees, holding the sunshade so that he should not at once recognise me. Not until I heard his step close by did I come forward, letting the sunshade fall.

'Is it you?' he exclaimed, and at the same moment I understood what a stupid thing I had done.

'Who else should it be?'

'No; of course not. I only thought that perhaps it was a joke the others were playing on me. Forgive me for being so

long in coming to you. I was at the hotel playing croquet. How nice it is to see you. Are you here with your parents?’

‘I am alone. I simply came out to see you.’

‘To see me! but it is impossible for us to be seen together.’

‘I thought we might have gone for a long walk.’

For a moment we stood looking at each other. Then he said: ‘I think I’d better tell you straight out how it is: I hope you won’t be angry with me; you know how disappointed I am that I cannot spend the afternoon with you. But a number of the people here have arranged a big picnic in which I have absolutely promised to take part. You see, I could not possibly—’

‘No; of course not,’ I interrupted, ‘how could you imagine I should come here and upset your plans.’ His face got that nervous look I dread.

'I think you are a little unreasonable,' he said.

'Perhaps. Then please excuse that also as well as my coming; I shall go at once. Good-bye, I hope you will have a jolly time.'

'But you need not go at once. We are not starting for an hour.'

'I think it is better. Besides what could we do in such a short time, and it would be a pity for you to be compromised by being seen with me.'

He held my hand for a long time and shook his head seriously at me. 'You are most unjust to me,' he said at last. 'Do you really believe that it is for my own sake that I am afraid of our being seen together?'

'No; of course not. It is only natural you should take care of my reputation; you have always guarded it so well.'

He did not answer, but dropped my hand, murmured a good-bye, and went without looking back.

I could have killed him! But as I watched him slowly disappear without once looking back, I had to use all my strength not to call out to him. When he had quite disappeared, I sank down in despair. I lay huddled up sobbing amongst the trees, imploring his forgiveness, and saying that he could beat me and illtreat me as much as he liked if he would only not go and leave me alone.

But when again I went down to the high-road I saw two large waggonettes driving towards me, and thought I saw him in front on one of them, sitting between two young girls, I hurried back into the wood so that he should not see me.

16th OF JULY.

ALL sorrow has vanished and joy reigns once more. We have explained ourselves, and defended ourselves. We have sealed eternal peace by kisses which were neither brother and sister

kisses nor Judas's kisses, but real original kisses for which Adam and Eve took out a patent in the Garden of Eden.

Amongst all our festive days it was one of the most beautiful. The dark background and the serious beginning gave it a curious charm all its own. We both had a longing to make up for past misery by being specially good to each other. He was just like that first day I went to him. Just as chivalrous and dear, as guarded and watchful in doing everything to please me, wrapping me in an atmosphere of tenderness and affection.

Besides the day had a gentle, half sad feeling—a sunset feeling—because it was our last meeting before my departure for Sorö, where mother and I were going for three weeks.

It is hard to part from him. If things had not happened as they did to-day no human power should have driven me away from him. Now I dare leave. The memories of this day will shine on my lone-

liness. I know that his love is not changed.

I am now able to laugh over my unsuccessful trip to Vedbaek. Ye gods! what a martyr I made of myself! Not the least because I had no money and had to walk about hungry while he, of course, feasted off the best.

SORÖ, 20th OF JULY.

EVERY place here recalls to me memories from my childhood. For it was here that Erik and I in the holidays strolled about together, rowed on the lake, and chased the birds in the woods.

It is still there, the old oak-tree, which filled my imagination with dark terror, at the same time fascinating me. The old, curiously deformed tree, whose branches stretched themselves like gigantic palsied limbs, and which gave shelter to legions of the greedy proletariat of the air, the poor,

always discontented, always shrieking rooks.

It was under this tree that Erik performed that deed which aroused my fear as well as my admiration.

It happened that one day we found the entire army of rooks wild with fury. The birds formed like a thick, black cloud which moved backwards and forwards above the tree, piercing the air with coarse and hateful shrieks. Terrified, I clung to Erik's arm and asked him what was the matter. He pointed upwards and said, 'Look there, do you see the owl, they want to kill it.'

I discovered the heavy fluffy bird which in blind fear—now and again uttering a despairing battle-cry—flew about among its deadly enemies. Already it showed signs of having been attacked, as some of its feathers dropped through the air.

I implored Erik to save it.

He bent down, picked a sharp flint from the ground, and flung it. The owl

flapped his wings a few times, then folding them fell heavily to the ground only a few yards from us. For a moment the rooks became silent. Then they started again, first singly, as though they were asking astonished questions, then in threatening, furious chorus directed to us. And when Erik lifted the dead owl up and we went away with it, the entire army of angry rooks whose prey we had seized followed us with their hoarse, revengeful shrieks. By throwing stones, clapping our hands and shouting, we sometimes succeeded in stopping them for a while. But soon after, they commenced again with renewed strength; they flew nearer and nearer, lower and lower, and at last I was so beside myself with terror that I ran along as fast as my legs could carry me, and Erik, who became infected with my fear, followed me.

But ever since then my heart always beats when I come near the old rook tree.

Even yesterday, when I stood under its

branches, I fancied I heard threats of revenge in the birds' noisy voices, and I wished Erik had been at my side to protect me.

26th OF JULY.

HE is always asking me to forgive him because his letters are so few and far between, and I cannot deny that now and again they seem rather poor. But I try to understand that as it is difficult for him to express his feelings, he does not make a good letter-writer.

Now I know him so well his letters may perhaps cause me a momentary disappointment, but they never make me really sad.

I comfort myself by writing twice as long and twice as often to him. I write a letter twice a day so that he may get one with each post. When I write my evening letter I know he is reading my morning letter, and when I am busy with my

morning letter he is just reading the one I wrote the evening before. In this way I build a bridge between him and me which is never broken. I am always with him. The little Vedbaek ladies shall not steal him from me. I am near him morn and eve, watching and guarding.

I am wise and say to myself: 'Let him enjoy his holiday and all the innocent amusements his stay in the country give him! What does it really matter even if he should have some little summer flirtations? When all comes to all he belongs to me. He has told me so and I trust him. Trust him blindly, and will not embitter my mind with any low suspicion.'

But should he ever be tempted too much, I am there with my letters, calling him back to the path of virtue. As a faithful sentinel I march up morning and evening to guard his tent against all base attacks.

31st OF JULY.

HE writes that he has got orders to start rehearsals on the 8th of August, just the day before mother and I are leaving Sorö. I have now got an excellent idea. I will ask him to come here on the 7th, and spend the last day of his holiday with me. It can perfectly well be arranged. Nobody here knows him, and we could meet in the woods, where I often spend hours alone. I know several lovely places where I never meet a soul. I will secretly prepare a little lunch basket, buy a bottle of good wine, and for once in a while he shall be my guest.

I won't give up this dream—I will see it realised—whatever difficulties turn up, I will get over them.

3rd OF AUGUST.

OF course he has ever so many scruples. He writes: 'Do you think it quite wise? It would certainly

be great fun, but after all, remember, dear, that we will very soon meet in Copenhagen. Do you therefore think it is worth while to expose yourself to the danger there must be in meeting me in the roads in Sorö forest?' He mentions a lot of 'ifs,' which no doubt are all very sensible, but which I don't care a fig about.

I am now going to bombard him with so many letters that he will have to give in, and after all he risks nothing, and when I wish it, then—why not?

No, my dear and wise cavalier, if you even put on your most serious face, I will answer you like the recklessly-loving girl I am, even if Sorö forest was full of fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, and other wild beasties, I will, will, will meet my love there next Sunday.

5th OF AUGUST.**V**ICTORY! He is coming!

In spite of serious scruples, he writes, 'as you please.' You can have as many scruples as you like if you will only come. I can see his solemn face when he wrote this letter of capitulation. I can see him shake his head half crossly, half smiling at this over-weakness: 'She is a terrible girl,' I am sure he has said to himself; 'she is so gentle and so angelic, all the same she twists me round her little finger.'

But don't be ashamed, dear one, because for once in a way you are giving in to me. I promise you I will repay you a hundred-fold.

'In all likelihood I shall be with you,' he says, 'but I beg you to remember that I may be prevented. I am not saying this because I can think of anything to prevent me, but merely because I know from experience that you are always badly prepared for a disappointment.'

Thank you, my most wise person. I will now write again, and won't forget to say that I shall consider, for instance, an earthquake sufficient excuse for not coming.

7th OF AUGUST.

Letter placed in the diary:—

'VEDBAEK, 6th OF AUGUST.

LET me start this letter, which will cause you great sorrow, by assuring you, and I hope you will believe me, that when in my last letter I wrote about possible hindrances to my visit to Sorö, I did not know that I was going to write this letter.

'I wish you would believe, even if you are unable to understand, that this is something which has come without clear and conscious reflection, but as something inevitable, something strong and forcible which simply could not be otherwise.

Though of course for a long time it has been smouldering in me, and has slowly and quietly worked its way. There were moments when I felt it, but I forced myself to believe that it meant nothing. Then again there were other moments when I confidently said to myself that it had only been foolish imaginings, a passing, meaningless dissatisfaction—everything is just as it was before.

‘Until at last the truth sprang forth in my soul like an unquenchable flame. It is over. It must be over.

‘Yes, Julie, the very hard and very sad thing I have to tell you is that everything must be finished between you and me. I cannot and will not lie to you. I tell you just as it is. I am weary, hopelessly weary, I can no more.

‘This came clearly to me this morning, when I had your last letter. I was still in bed when it was brought to me. I expected the letter, I knew it would come. Now, listen calmly to this, and don’t

judge me at once. I was lying wishing that just for once no letter would arrive, and I simply dreaded to see my landlady come in with the fat letter of which I knew every twist and turn of the writing on the envelope, and alas! even beforehand seemed to know the contents. The letter lay on the counterpane like a nightmare, it seemed heavy on my heart, filling me with a thousand vague fears. A grey oppression seemed to paralyse my brain and filled my soul with desperate weariness. I could not get myself to open the letter and read it.

‘How long I lay like this I don’t know. There were no clear thoughts in my head, only this heavy, grey oppression which made me so tired that now and again I fell into a nervous sleep.

‘At last I forced myself with a wrench out of this drowsy state. I jumped out of bed, drew the curtains from the window so that the full daylight could stream in. Like a deliverance, almost like a hap-

piness, the clear and conscious thought leapt into my mind, "It is over, it must be over."

'I will go on telling you the truth. I won't garland my thoughts and feelings. It was happiness I felt at the moment. I felt so free and light-hearted. Just as if I was born again with new strength and new hopes.

'But when a short while ago I sat down to write this letter I realised that the hardest task was still undone.

'For the point is that I have nothing at all to reproach you with. On the contrary, I have only to thank you again and again for all the beauty you brought me, and for all your sweet love.

'Yet I come to you saying it is over, I am weary. You must set me free, however hard and unjust it seems to you. But the most despairing part of it all is that most likely you will not be able to understand it at all. You will only understand that I have failed you in spite

of all your great love, and you will either think that I am acting through madness, or that I have hitherto lived like a scoundrel. Yet the truth is that I am neither a madman nor a liar, but a liberty-sick man whose mind and soul become paralysed the moment he feels himself hemmed in by a relationship.

‘You see when you and I first met, neither of us fancied it would mean more than a moment’s fleeting and untrammelled joy. It was a caprice, an irresistible impulse in us both with no thought of a binding or constant relationship, let alone eternal love.

‘Then it happened that we really fell in love with one another. That I have loved you, I need scarcely assure you. Though you often teasingly reproached me that I did not tell you so, you knew it by the sound of my voice, by my glance, by my whole being which never attempted to hide how precious you were to me. You came to me as something new and

wonderful, so unsullied and trusting, that you aroused in me feelings more gently devoted than I had known before. In the radiant morning flush of our love I seemed to myself like a happy explorer and conqueror, free, strong, burgeoning with will and gifts for new victories.

'We loved one another, but our love was of a different race. I loved as the experienced man, and as the man with the artist's need for liberty. For you, love was all and everything in your life, you had no higher wish than to give yourself and to possess me entirely and without restriction.

'I wished to enjoy our love as an oasis in the humdrum of everyday life, but you, you wanted it to be life itself. Therefore it happened quite naturally that your young, strong, passionate love ran my less vigorous love tired.

'Our love shaped itself into something greater and more serious than I could or would embark on, and gradually it

frightened me. I saw how your love grew day by day, I felt how you clung closer and closer to me, and egoist as I am, I revolted against this constant intimacy with you. I began to feel the unpleasantness of being responsible for another's life, I felt myself restricted in my movements, enslaved, imprisoned. The moment came when I had to break out again, feel space round me, stand alone and free.

'Besides, the habit which had gradually crept into our love tortured and depressed me. Such men as I fear marriage just because it is love regulated and systematised. But our meetings, which in the beginning had all the charm of the unexpected, the mysterious, the fairy-tale, grew soon into well-ordered domesticity. We met on such and such days at certain hours, and gradually we spent a certain number of hours in each other's company every day. There was nothing unexpected, nothing mysterious any longer,

only a daily repetition of the one and the same.

‘Before, when you were coming to me it was a joy to prepare everything for your reception, and when we parted I asked with expectant eagerness, “When do we meet again?” Later, there came times when I had to force myself to say the conventional parting words, “I suppose we meet to-morrow?” and when you came, to ask you, “What will you have to drink?” and “Will you have a cigarette?” I hoped it would be better when I went into the country and we didn’t meet, but, unfortunately, there are such things as letters. There is always some possibility for a variation in personal intercourse, while letters are everlasting uniformity. They begin and they end with the same phrases, at the most the words occasionally change places, they are posted and distributed at regular hours, they troop up like soldiers in their unchanging envelope uniform and their regulation stamp

epaulette. All this meant nothing to you, but for me it was the shifting sand that slowly buried my weary love. For that is the beginning and the end of what I have to confess to you—I am weary. I can no more. I must be free. While writing this I feel my weariness to such a degree that I am unable to tell you of all the good warm feelings my heart still holds for you. It also seems to me undignified to adorn with beautiful words this letter which brings you a message you have every right to think brutal and unjust. I think so myself. I feel also how revolting it is to break our relationship merely because you love me too much. All the same it cannot be otherwise. All my arguments are of no value against my weary I can no more. Neither is it anything that will be cured to-morrow or the day after. Please don't believe that. No, it is over, and both you and I will be wise in not attempting to call it back to life.

'For after this only what is ugly could follow.

'You have often said to me, "Promise me always to treat me honestly." The day you feel yourself tired of our love, tell me so. I can bear it if you break with me, but I could never forgive you if I discovered that I had been living on your pity and generosity." The day you anticipated has now come, and what you asked me to tell you I tell you now frankly. Perhaps you will say you have deceived me all the same, for you have been weary for some time. To this my answer is, I have not myself been conscious of my weariness, and could not confess that to you which I had not confessed to myself. Now when we part we will both be able to think of our love as a beautiful and wonderful experience—no bitterness will mar the memory. The parting itself is always bitter. I simply dare not think of the sorrow and pain I am causing you. But when some time

has passed, and we meet again—more calmly than we could meet now—I believe you will say as I say now that we part just at the right moment. We have carried the shield of our love unblemished from the battle.

‘Farewell—try not to judge me too hardly. A.’

8th OF AUGUST.

THE day passed and the night passed. A new day has begun. It was yesterday it happened, and I am alive.

So sorrow does not kill after all, and I still allow myself to live.

When I got his letter, and had read it twice, and understood that it was neither a joke nor a misunderstanding, I did not cry, I did not faint. I was quite calm, and reflected in a curious clear and calm way. ‘So it is really finished,’ I said aloud to myself. My voice sounded dry and curiously uninterested. I thought to

myself, 'You ought to have said that with more feeling.' But there was no feeling in me. Everything had stiffened within me. My heart did not beat, and my nerves did not tremble. Even my face had grown stiff, the skin seemed quite tight. I smoothed it, and forced it into a smile to make sure that I could move it.

I went out of the house. Where, I did not know. But a voice within me went on saying, 'It is impossible for you to stay here. You must get away before any of the others see you.'

I met people I knew. I bowed to them, and I spoke to an old lady. She told me a long story about an illness from which she had just recovered. When we parted she said, 'You look perfectly charming to-day,' and added, 'but of course you are so young and happy.' I reached the forest and stood on a little open place by the lake. I stood on the little landing-stage and looked down into the water thinking, 'if you were really very sad you would let

yourself glide down there, and soon you would be all right.'

From the town sounded the church bells, calling people to afternoon service. I looked round, and it seemed that never before had I realised how beautiful the place was. My sight seemed clearer. I saw things I had never noticed before. For instance the tiny island where the trees like love-sick narcissus bent their foliage to mirror themselves in the water. I heard numberless fine sounds in the rushes near the lake, and from the grasses and trees in the wood the voices of insects buzzing, of birds nestling among the leaves, of the fishes making bubbles on the surface of the water. I lost myself in admiration of the shape of the ever-changing clouds which looked so calm and unchanging on this quiet summer day, yet when one closely followed their slow gliding through space, one discovered that one moment they were shining gold-edged islands, the next large swooping birds,

suddenly to dissolve themselves into crowds of tiny playing cloud children.

With one big glance I took in the entire picture, and I thought, 'Even should you never come here again, you will always remember what it looks like.'

I walked into the thickness of the forest. The same curious clearness followed me, the same reflective, receptive mood.

Until the sudden remembrance of his letter in my pocket stabbed my heart and made my soul shiver. My knees shook under me, and I had to lean against a tree to prevent myself from falling. I crushed the letter in my hand, and without reading it I saw every word before me.

It was really true—he had left me—it was all over.

I had said the same words before. They had followed me all the time, but not until this moment had they reached my heart, which they made writhe with pain.

Finished, not to see him any more!

What is he really like? I tried to recall his face, but it fled from me; I only saw two large dark eyes which calmly, wearily, and ironically smiled at me.

I cried to heaven in fear and despair. I implored and prayed that it might not be true. 'I understand it is a punishment, O God, but don't you think you have tortured me enough. Now I am going to close my eyes, and when I open them I pray you let it be a dream from which I awaken.'

Again I stood by the lake, and it seemed as though my only salvation was to throw myself in. I did not rave any longer, I was sad unto death. I wept quietly and gently, I saw the beautiful summer landscape in front of me, and it struck me that I, who was so young, had nothing more to hope from life.

When a voice within me said, 'Yes, there is still hope, perhaps even now there

is a wire for you, or another letter may be on its way.'

Yes, of course that's it, that's it, that's what will happen, and I hastened back, allowing hope to build the loveliest dreams.

There was no wire, and no letter has come.

But I won't give up all hope before I have seen him.

Already he must be back in town, and we leave here to-morrow. I have written to him. He will be astonished with my letter, and I think he will like it. It is quite free from anything hysterical. It is calm and sensible. I wrote, 'Perhaps you are right in thinking that something a little faded has crept over our love, and possibly—as you suggest—there is no other remedy than that we don't meet for some time. But perhaps it is also possible that by mutual efforts we may arrange matters in a way which would not

hurt quite so much. Let me therefore know what time within the next few days I can see you. Don't be afraid that I shall come with too miserable a face. On the contrary you will see how clearly and sympathetically I shall understand your every mood, and altogether try to behave as you would like.'

9th OF AUGUST.

L'ATE last night I sat in front of my mirror brushing my hair. I was dead tired, but not at all sleepy, and I sat looking at my reflection, getting quite frightened by noticing the pale face with ghostly shining eyes. I began to tremble, and nervously turned my head away so as not to see any more.

My eyes fell on the wall behind the chest of drawers. The wall was covered with an old yellow paper with spots of damp, and here and there it was torn. On the musty paper crawled an insect, a

long, narrow, flat, brown creepy thing with many quickly moving legs. It surely came from the crack in the right-hand corner. With horror I watched its manœuvres along the wall. It was seeking the warmth of the candle on the chest of drawers. I stood up with a clothes brush in my hand to kill it, when I saw another just the same peep out from the crack, and slowly move along the wall. I stood paralysed with an uncanny fear, staring with wide, stiff eyes at these loathsome things, when look! it seemed as if the wall was suddenly covered with them, one after the other the insects appeared from the crack and crawled in a long caravan towards the chest. I also discovered now that they came not only from the crack, but from every tiny split in the paper, and in great numbers they hurried out from the cracks between the walls and the floor.

I did not dare to move—did not dare to kill them, fearing that for each I killed ten others would appear. I had not the

courage to kill these things which seemed to come from a grave bringing with them death and putrefaction.

I only stood waiting for the terrible moment when they would reach the chest and come near to me. Already they stretched their shimmering legs to reach the drapery over my mirror. With every nerve strained I watched their efforts. Then I started with feeling a cold touch on my hand which rested on the chest of drawers. With a shriek I shook the insect off, and discovered in the same moment that they had started to crawl up the chest from the floor.

In that minute I was mad. I thought, 'Here they come, look at them, they are coming like corpse-carriers to take me to the grave.' I rushed from the room and into mother's who woke up startled, and to whom I could only say that I was frightened, only frightened. Mother took me in her arms and soothed me, like she did when I was a little child. Gradu-

ally I grew calmer and lay weeping gently. Then mother said: 'Do tell me what is the matter. Why did you let Erik go away, and why are you so miserable?'

But I begged her not to question me. Later on I would tell her everything. Mother took my face between her hands and looked straight into my eyes, while she said: 'There is only one thing, Julie, you must and shall tell me—is it possible that you are——? I stopped her by putting my hand over her mouth. 'No, mother dear,'—and I smiled sadly—'that which you are thinking of you need not fear.' 'Then, thank God, you don't know how frightened I have been during the last few days. Of course I had guessed that there was something you were keeping secret from us. I thought you were meeting some one at Christiane's, and that in time you would come and tell us that you were engaged.'

'No, mother dear, in that also you are

mistaken. I have no engagement to tell you of.'

10th OF AUGUST, EVENING,
COPENHAGEN.

I AM again in the old nest. It is dark and ugly here, but what does it matter. After all I breathe the same air as he does. I may meet him in the street, and when to-morrow I have fetched his letter I can be with him in ten minutes.

I am glad that at present mother and I are alone, so I need not make any pretence of cheerfulness. Father and Frantz are in Jutland, and they won't be back for another ten days.

11th OF AUGUST.

HE does not wish me to come to him, at all events not at present. He dares not see me yet, he writes. He wants to be left alone. But he promises soon to send me a message.

20th OF AUGUST.

EVERY morning when I wake up I think, 'To-day I shall have a letter.' But the days go by, heavy, long and grey and they bring nothing from him. No greeting, no message, not the tiniest word.

How can he be so cruel! He is treating me in a way which even he could hardly defend.

22nd OF AUGUST.

HAS he disappeared from earth? Where does he hide himself, and what is he doing?

In vain I look for him in the streets at the times and in the places where he usually goes. For hours I have stood, outside his house, but I never get a glimpse of him.

25th OF AUGUST.

NOW I understand, he never means to see me again.

Time after time I have been on the staircase, but I did not dare to ring the bell. To-day I did, and the maid came out to say he was not at home. It was not true, I could read in her face that she had orders not to admit me. She seemed embarrassed and looked pitifully at me.

Fancy that he would submit me to so much humiliation.

But I will see him. I will speak to him. He has no right to treat me as he does.

Though of course that is just the point, he can treat me exactly as he pleases. He may humiliate me and ill-treat me—I should only feel it a joy to be tortured by him. I will crawl at his feet like a dog—he can kick me away, I will return and I won't leave him in peace until he lets me stay with him.

I thought that there was perhaps some one else he loves now and who comes to him, and that this was the reason that he would not see me.

I will write to him: Love any one else you like. If I am not sufficient for you and if you need change—well—it must be so. I shall understand. You are an artist. You need new impressions, new inspirations. I am only a poor little girl with nothing but my love. But I want you to know that without anger, I can share you with another.

The only thing I demand is that you shall not give me up. I will—in spite of everything and everybody—have some part in you, and I want to be the one who is near you when all the others have gone.

1st OF SEPT.

HE answers me:

‘No, Julie, you must not send me such letters. As I learned to know you—as I think of you—you stand for me as a symbol of nobility, a fine and original nature who never worried about bourgeois laws and prejudices, a refined little woman who never grew common by breaking the rules of good society, but who on the contrary gained thereby and developed into a nobler personality.

‘No, Julie, it cannot possibly be you who sent me that housemaid’s letter which took your name in vain.

‘Where could you, pure, proud, dear girl, have learned those hectic, excited words.

‘I have—I know it only too well—treated you cruelly. But what you are now doing for yourself is a thousandfold more cruel.

‘My own darling, my soul’s proud and sweet memory, I sorrow over your letter

as over a vandalism. More than that, I am ashamed on your account, and to me it seems the saddest thing I have ever experienced.'

I have written to him for the last time:—

'I thank you for your letter. It hurt so much that I could hardly bear it. I needed the brutal truth and it has done its work. Don't think that I look upon it as a humiliation that I was ready to lie in the dust at your feet. But it was unworthy of me to force myself on you when I ought to have understood you do not want me back at any price.

'I ask your forgiveness with all my heart. I knew all the time I had no right to demand anything from you. Of my own free will I came to you and gave myself to you—you never tied me by promises and conditions. But you were very, very good to me. You were too good.

This is my only excuse for finding it so difficult to let you go.

'But before we part, I wish you to know how altogether foolish and undignified I have been in my relationship to you. From the very first day I believed it would end in marriage. When I told you I had no wish to marry you, when I even assured you I should consider it perfect madness—I told you a lie. All my thoughts and longings were directed to the one aim of making myself so necessary to you that some day you would ask me to be your wife.

'I am not at all that dignified, high-minded girl you thought me. Behind all my brave show of independence was lurking, first unconsciously then intentionally, the cowardly bourgeois hope that ultimately we should have the legitimate church blessing on our relationship.

'My calculation failed miserably. During these days I have asked myself if

I did not set about it in the most foolish way. I might more surely have reached my goal if I had been more reserved in my way of loving.

'But after all, I believe I chose the only way possible for me, because I loved you too well to barter myself inch by inch for the highest price.

'I have lost my game, but I don't regret it; however poor the future may be, I know that the stake I risked is after all not lost. However poor, I shall be richer in memories than anybody else in the world. Come what may I will always bless the day I became yours.

'Gaily I came to you, sadly I turn away from you now you have left me. You took much but you gave much. You, my dear and beloved master, my white Sheik, the dream of my youth and its sorrow-laden happiness.

'I thank you for it all, for your loving graciousness, for your severe punishment.

'High you aim, recklessly you ride,

never caring whether on your way you crush sand or blossoms. May God make your victorious ride bright and happy!

‘JULIE.’

12th OF SEPT.

I FEEL so cold. The days grow shorter and the evenings fall over me dark and heavy. I sit in the window while the daylight wanes; I look over aimlessly to the house where before my thoughts played their fairy game. The house is mournful and commonplace like our own, and where before my fairy prince moved about sits now a fat, indolent matron filling with sleepy stitches a piece of canvas.

They say that Erik has returned. Emmy told me the other day that she had seen him.

I am glad he has not called here. I

don't want him to see how miserable I am.

I feel so cold, it is as if the whole house shivered. Never before has it been quite so dull, and cold, and sad.' We move about like shadows. Nobody speaks aloud, and we meet as at a funeral.

When mother and I are alone in the evening, we don't talk. We sit each with our own thoughts, but I know that her thoughts are all round me.

THE END OF SEPTEMBER.

I FEEL happier at grandmama's. As often as I can I go to her after lunch.

Through the noisy streets where the people rush and scramble in the struggle for existence—through the feverish life, which to me seems so course and hideous, leaving on my soul the impression of a hideous battle with hateful shrieks and despairing moaning, I fly to the little side

street where grandmama lives. There I only hear the noise in a softened murmur. But when I am once safely in grandmama's sitting-room, I feel as if I had escaped a great danger.

Here it is cosy and restful, here I find peace for my sorrow, healing for my wound. Here all revolting thoughts are softened down, here are smoothed out all violent desires and sick longings.

Here grandmama sits old and full of days and of the great wisdom which does not ask and does not blame, which understands and forgives, which holds comfort for everything. I become like a child again in grandmama's room. I have my place just as when I was a little girl on a footstool at her feet, and sit there looking through the old portfolios full of faded etchings.

Struensen and his lovely royal mistress; Frederick the Sixth, a poor thin-legged boy in warlike uniform receiving the troops; the fire of Christianborg Castle in

1794; Robespierre who on the same page is shown jumping out of the window of the town hall and being carried off to the guillotine, with mangled arms and legs; Fru Heiberg—the great actress—first as a bewitching, unconscious maiden, and later as a sentimental celebrity with long shawl and ethereal glances.

Or I take a piece of work and try to make myself useful, or I read the newspaper to grandmama, who with the greatest interest follows the foreign news and nods solemnly every time we hear of fresh labour strikes.

Yes, I am happier at grandmama's—she and old Marie vie with other in spoiling me. As soon as I am settled down comfortably grandmama says with a roguish shake of her head to her old maid: 'Well, Marie, I suppose we have nothing at all to-day to give Miss Julie.'

After which Marie answers, just as roguishly, 'I really don't know, ma'am, but I better have a look.'

To the general surprise she brings a little later either an orange or a piece of home-made cake, or some pudding with jam. There is always something, and it always tastes childishly good because these dear old people are so happy in giving it to me, and understand so well that just what I need is to be treated like a sorrowful child.

OCT.

I WISH I could travel far away from it all. I shiver when I think of the long winter in surroundings which every moment of the day remind me of that which is dead and ought to be buried and forgotten, but which still bleeds within me like an open wound.

But where, and how?

What I need is to stand on my own feet, work hard, battle with life, make my own way. But I am no good for anything, except that bit of china painting,

which is not enough to live or die on. I have said to myself the only way out of it is to get away to America and take a situation as maid, governess, or it does not matter what. But I am too much of a coward. I have not got the reckless courage which is needed for living under any sort of straits. My body is spoilt and dare not start a contest with heavy labour, and I should suffer by being treated as a menial.

I should not even have the energy to force the permission from my parents. I felt this the other day when I testingly said to mother that I thought of going away. She looked terrified at me and said, 'Could you really do that to me?' In the same moment all my will-power had melted, and my plans for travel and work collapsed miserably. No, I have neither strength nor courage to break away. But if I go on staying at home I shall go to pieces. I think that I must feel like a bird who, after being impris-

oned in a cage, is allowed to spend some free and beautiful days in the wood only to be again imprisoned. Something in me is broken. I want to fly away, but however much I flap my wings I cannot start a new flight.

13th OF OCT.

AT last that has happened which I both hoped and feared. I have met him. I went to town to visit grandmama. He came towards me with a friend. We saw each other some way off. Now and again people came between us so that we were hidden from each other; then again our eyes met. My first impulse was to turn back. But I forced myself to go on. I felt there was something which had to be decided now. And calmly and quietly—with a terrible effort of will—I kept my eyes fixed on him. We were only a few steps from each other. I saw a nervous glint in his eyes—I never let

mine leave his—and when we passed he quickly took off his hat and bowed.

It was the first time he had ever greeted me in a public street.

I felt at that moment that I had been the stronger. But as soon as he had passed my strength failed; my knees shook under me, and I had to seek shelter in a doorway to support myself. If he had turned and followed me! I grew quite faint at the thought of it.

But he did not come; and while I went further on my way, and as I gradually got assured that he would not come, I thought that, though it was a bitter disappointment, I could now perhaps even hope for deliverance.

THE LAST DAYS OF OCTOBER.

OF late I have often been in Fredericksberg Park. It is so beautiful there just now when the leaves are dying in the most wonderful colouring, carried

golden to the earth by singing sunbeams.

I quite understand why this garden is much frequented by old people and lonely souls. At its fence the noise of the town stops, and the park is an asylum for quiet thoughts and quiet sorrows. It is a graveyard of sweet memories and broken illusions.

Every day I meet the same people. It is as if I knew them all, and I seem also to know why they come here. There is the old neatly-clothed gentleman whose mouth always moves in the angry, white face, and who incessantly beats the air with his stick. What can be but a late civil service man who continues his fury against his—to him—unjust dismissal? And does one need to ask what the tall, slender lady, dressed in black, is thinking of? She comes with her young daughter, who is also in mourning, and she smiles faintly and absent-mindedly at the young girl's chatter. Or she, the young cripple, who

is wheeled along the path by a tired, worn-out motherly person.

Or I myself? Do not the others suspect the fate which has made me a member of their little community?

A few days ago Erik paid us a visit, but I did not see him. On hearing his voice in the hall I hastened into my own room, and when mother shortly after asked me to see him I begged her to tell him that I was not very well.

1st OF NOV.

WAS it fancy or reality? When to-day I went to the park I saw a figure like Erik's disappear amongst the carriages. I wonder had he followed me? But if it was he, why did he not come up to me? He, at all events, has no reason to avoid a meeting.

30th OF DECEMBER.

TWO months have gone since I last wrote in my diary. Nothing has happened worth writing down, and I thought my life was at an end, and that everything that happened in the future would be like withered leaves falling over something past and dead.

But while I thought in this way, I lied to myself. For while the sad and bitter days dropped over me tiny new shoots began to spring up quietly, and without my knowledge, under the withered leaves.

I felt, and I was ashamed of the feeling, that I was too young to have finished with life. I caught myself dreaming of a future which was not all memories. I tried to thrust these temptations away; they seemed a sacrilege to my sorrow. I clung to my sorrow. I sought shelter and protection under its large, heavy wings like a nun in her convent cell. But just when I fancied myself most safe, I felt in my soul vague stirrings of new

hopes and promises, and I understood that I was conquered.

But I am no longer a child of illusions. I don't expect a fairy prince. I don't believe that life will offer me an eternal feast. I know I will have to take the bad with the good—more week-days than fete-days. I know that what is coming will be neither grand nor remarkable, but I know also that I ought to be very grateful that at all events it is life. I must take my part in life since I cannot go to the dead, and since I am too young to find peace in the convent of sorrow. And since Erik, my faithful friend, will take me as I am without question, without reproach, fine and manly without demanding any humiliation on my part.

It was he I saw that day outside the park. A few days after I met him again, and that day we walked together, and he told me how he had often watched me, but had kept at a distance because he thought I preferred to be alone. I an-

swered that I had no reason to seek loneliness, but he, not believing me, kept silent. During the weeks that followed, I often met him, and now and again we talked together. He began again to come as before, and every time he came the temptation invaded my soul.

At last one evening, about a week ago, he found me alone, and let me understand that he knew everything. He did not tell me straight out, but he told me this story:—

One of his friends in Germany loved a young girl. He was a clever merchant and a good fellow, but neither very amusing nor very interesting, just an everyday sort of person like me, for instance, he added with a smile. She was—then came a long, flattering description. Besides being very charming, she was a romantic little creature with exaggerated notions of life. It was therefore not to be wondered at that she let her merchant-cousin understand that his love was hopeless.

She flew away from him, and she flew far. Then came the day he found her again wingshot and sorrowful. Her spirited flight had not brought her joy. Her pain hurt him more than if it had been his own, for he loved her still, and had never loved anybody else. He did not ask her to be his, for he feared to hurt her sick heart, but he tried to show her that she had no better friend in the world, and that his greatest happiness would be to take care of her. She understood him, and when some time had passed she came to him and told him that she had grown very fond of him. And now they are happy married merchant folk in a little German town.

When Erik had finished his story we were both rather embarrassed, and for some time neither of us spoke. We sat some time looking at each other, and I thought that after all he could not know everything. At last, therefore, I asked, 'Then the young German lady had been engaged to somebody else?' 'No,' said

Erik, and he looked at me with a steady glance, 'she had been another man's mistress.' 'And yet?' 'In his eyes she had not sinned; she had merely loved another. He was happy because he could now help her, and because he knew that if she were his wife she would not betray him.'

Then we talked about other things, but when Erik was going, I said, 'Do be a dear, and come on New Year's Eve, as you did in the old days.' His eyes grew moist, and his voice trembled when he answered, 'Thank you, Julie.'

But later, when father and mother came home, and I told mother that I had invited Erik for the New Year's Eve, she was happier, the darling little mother, than I have seen her for a long time. That evening we sat up late and talked confidentially together as we used to; we wept together, and we laughed too, and mother could not say all the good things she was going to do for me.

It is quite settled. Erik will be here

for New Year's Eve, and when the old clock rings out the New Year, no popping champagne corks will accompany its festive chimes, but I will quietly touch Erik's hand and beg him to help me to make the New Year happy.

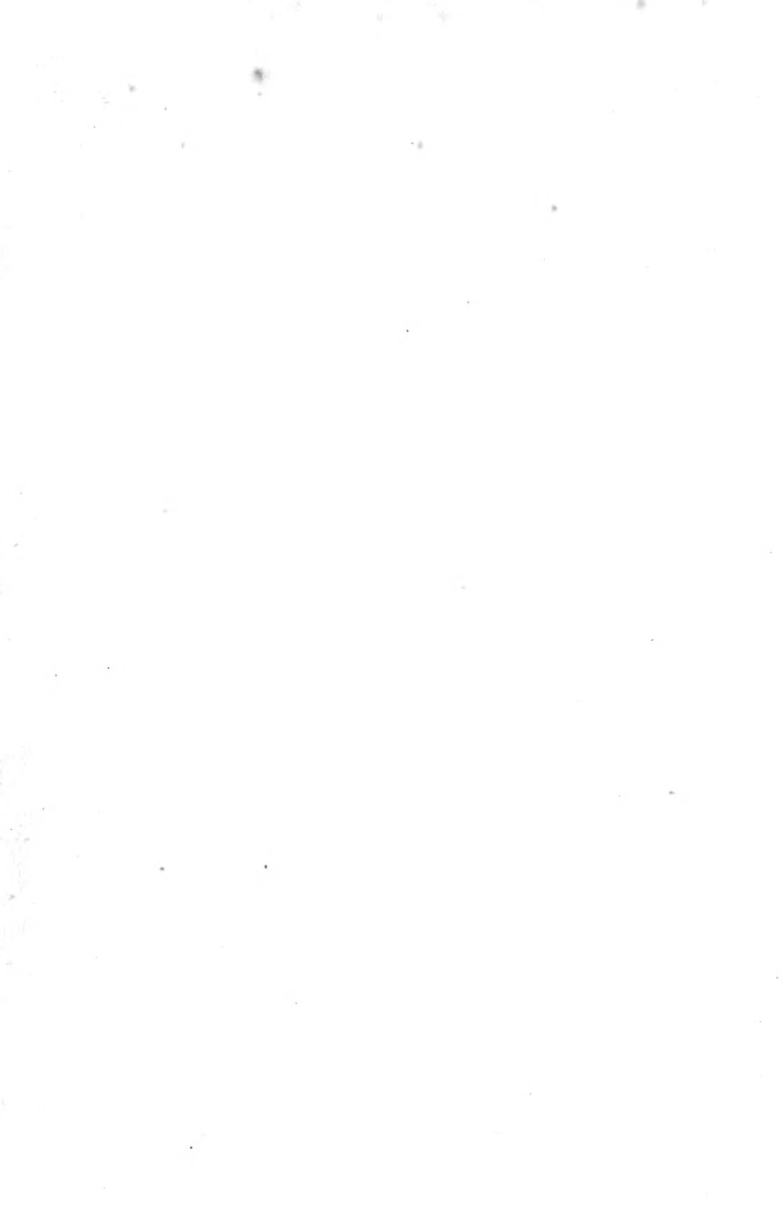
Before this I shall have set my house in order. I have taken leave of all my memories of him. I have buried his letters, kissed them for the last time, for the last time wet them with my tears. I have also burnt his photograph; it was hardest to part with that one of him as a little boy. Now it has all gone, but the veil which lay in the drawer with all the other things I could not burn. Mother's and my veil. I buried my face in it; it seemed to me a living being, a faithful friend, silent to all others, but whispering to me a sweet and intoxicating perfume of beautiful memories. I could not kill that. I felt as if it imploringly touched my cheek. I kissed it, and wept into its soft folds, and promised it that we two should never part.

I will wind it round my diary and hide them both so that no one shall find them. But should hours come when life seems grey, and poor, and empty, I will seek out my two old confidants, and revive with them the short time when life's rich and manifold splendours, like a wonderful revelation, blessed my poor youth.

My diary is finished. The year I started with such uncertainty is finished. It became the year of my fate. Rich in happiness and rich in pain. I wonder which was greater, the happiness or the sorrow? I cannot, and will not, measure it. I only know that I wish nothing altered.

Beautiful and terrible year, I part from you in gratitude. Because you wrote my life's fairy-tale—never to be forgotten.









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